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ABSTRACT

This document examines the supports communities provide to adolescents and the contributions adolescents in turn make to communities. In the first section of the document, the capacities adolescents need to function in adult roles are discussed and the supports for developing these capacities available from public policy are described. The traditional sources for supporting the development of youth, including family and school, are reviewed. The nature of communities as contexts for strengthening the capacities of youth is examined. In the second section, the availability, use, and impact of these community supports are assessed: (1) opportunities to participate in organized, ongoing groups; (2) avenues for contributing to the well-being of others; (3) sources of personal support; and (4) access to community facilities and events including museums, libraries, parks, civic events, and celebrations. In the final section, policy issues raised by the review of community supports are discussed, noting that establishing a deliberately drawn policy for generating and sustaining community supports depends on answering questions for which there is not sufficient information yet to answer. The document concludes with an agenda for research and experimentation to provide that information and to lay the groundwork for strengthening the reciprocal relationships between adolescents and communities. (ABL)

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Communities and Adolescents: An Exploration of Reciprocal Supports

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CG 020974

Youth and America's Future:
The William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship

YOUTH AND AMERICA'S FUTURE:
THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

When William Thomas Grant established the Grant Foundation in 1936, he sought a better understanding of the ways in which individuals adapt to the vicissitudes of life. Touched in his professional life by the importance of good human relationships, Mr. Grant wished to "help children develop what is in them" so they would better "enjoy all the good things the world has to offer them."

Fifty years later, recognizing the special needs of older adolescents in our changing society, the Foundation's Trustees established **Youth and America's Future** with much the same purpose; its charge is to evaluate current knowledge, stimulate new ideas, increase communication among researchers, practitioners and policymakers, and, thus, to help our nation chart a better future for youth.

The Foundation's President, Robert J. Haggerty, M.D., has described the Commission's unique perspective:

"Against a rising chorus of legitimate concern about the many problems facing today's youth, the Foundation has initiated this Commission on Youth and America's Future to speak in a different voice. It will explore the strengths of America's young men and women, their families and the programs and community institutions that serve them. We adopt this approach not to diminish the importance of the problems that exist, but to learn the lessons of success. The Foundation is confident that this effort to look with renewed respect at youth, where it strides as well as where it stumbles, will help forge the links of understanding and mutual responsibility that make our democracy strong."

The publications in this series have been prepared to inform the Commission and to stimulate its thinking. While the Commission does not necessarily endorse the various findings presented, it does encourage their thoughtful consideration in the interests of American youth.

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COMMUNITIES AND ADOLESCENTS: AN EXPLORATION OF RECIPROCAL SUPPORTS

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Commentaries by

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May 1988

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Executive Summary

> [M]ost teenagers (63%) consider themselves "regulars" at the mall. . . [they] travel in groups of two or three. . . . They tend to lounge around the seating areas on the first floor of the central court or to lean on the second-floor railings overlooking the court below. . . . For the teenage population, hanging around the mall is less a way to spend money than it is a way of passing time.
>
> Anthony 1985: 310-311

Communities are a resource for supporting the development of youth. This paper goes beyond the shopping mall to explore the supports communities provide adolescents and the contributions adolescents make to communities in turn.

In the first section of this paper, we examine the capacities adolescents need to function in adult roles and the supports for developing these capacities available from public policy. We briefly review the traditional sources for supporting the development of youth, including family and school, and we examine, in somewhat more depth, the nature of communities as contexts for strengthening the capacities of youth.

In the second section, based on a literature review across a variety of social science disciplines, we assess the rationale for and the availability, use, and impact of community supports of four kinds: (1) opportunities to participate in organized, ongoing groups, (2) avenues for contributing to the well-being of others, (3) sources of personal support, and (4) access to community facilities and events including museums, libraries, parks, civic events, and celebrations.

In the final section, we examine the policy issues raised by the review of community supports and note that establishing a deliberately drawn policy for generating and sustaining community supports depends on answering questions we now do not have sufficient information to answer. This paper concludes with an agenda for research and experimentation to provide that information and to lay the ground work for strengthening the reciprocal relationships between adolescents and communities.

I. Supporting Adolescents in the Transition to Adulthood

Communities are a resource for supporting the development of youth that is largely untapped and about which little is known. This paper explores the opportunities and supports communities provide adolescents and the contributions adolescents make to communities in turn. We have investigated the current and potential relationships between adolescents and communities from the perspective of the Grant Commission's interest in facilitating the development of youth able to make the transition successfully to the adult roles of worker, parent, and citizen. In reviewing what is known from research and practice, the Commission's aim is to derive recommendations for programs, policies, and further research that encourage the development of youth who, when adult, are able to function as participating members of their country's economy and as contributing members of their families and communities.

In the first section of this paper, we address the capacities adolescents need to function in adult roles, current public policy toward youth, and the reasons for a broadened policy agenda. Section two discusses the current and potential relationship between adolescents and communities. Section three identifies policy issues and an agenda for research and experimentation needed to construct a deliberate policy for enhancing the reciprocal supports that adolescents and communities can provide each other.

Capacities Adolescents Need to Function in Adult Roles

The capacities adults need to fill the roles of worker, parent, and citizen are not directly addressed by recent social science literature. However, a closely related issue -- the process of transition from adolescence to adulthood -- has been considered. Greenberger and Steinberg (1986), who study youth employment, note that in the past American youth could be socialized into adult roles that consisted of predictable activities. The rapid changes and many choices that now characterize American society require instead that adolescents develop capabilities that give them the flexibility and competence to meet demands that may change several times during their adult lives.

We agree with this assessment of the need for capacities that go beyond the performance of particular roles. Our delineation of the particular capacities needed by adults is based on the work of Joan Costello (1980), who proposes four capacities that adolescents must acquire and that adults need -- and will continue to need-- to function in society. These are physical vitality, the ability to sustain caring relationships, resourcefulness, and a sense of social connectedness.

Physical vitality is the ability to sustain a threshold of well-being that permits adequate physical and mental activity. It includes health, energy, stamina, resistance, and resilience. Physical vitality is a prerequisite to accomplishing the tasks of everyday life.

Ability to sustain caring relationships is the capacity to give and to accept care in turn. This ability is central to a person's sense of self-worth and a prerequisite for nurturing children, sustaining the aged, or attending to the needs of friends. Absence of the capacity to sustain caring relationships jeopardizes an adult's ability to respect the rights of others and "to live productively and peaceably among them" (Costello 1980: 23).

Resourcefulness is the ability to act effectively to achieve objectives for

oneself and others. The components of resourcefulness are the possession of practical knowledge and skills, the ability to seek and sift information, to learn new things, and to apply knowledge and skills in effective action. Examples of practical knowledge and skills include functional literacy and numeracy and the social skills needed to negotiate the everyday world.

Social connectedness is the sense individuals have of affiliation with a social community that validates their identity, provides supports and services, and requires contributions in turn. In enhancing the individuals' sense of identity and providing support, communities get the benefit of individuals' sense of connection with the community, that is, assurance that community members will "respect and contribute to interests that transcend [their] own: that [they] will sacrifice self-interest to public interests in order to accomplish social goals" (Costello 1980: 25).

Current Public Policy Toward Children, Youth, and Families

Except in education, public policy in this country has not focused on enhancing the development of these capacities in children and youth. American cultural and political traditions consider responsibility for raising the next generation a matter of private, family concern. This belief in the responsibility of the family for independently raising its children has remained at the heart of public policy and provisions for children and families in this country well past the time when the family was the basic unit of economic production or the dominant force in the socialization of children. In fact, families share their children's socialization with child care providers, schools, television and other forms of mass communication, and an array of professionals with whom parents and their children come in contact (Grubb and Lazerson 1982).

In this country, public responsibility for children has been assumed only when families are considered to have failed. The focus on parental dysfunction as the

precondition for public assistance or support is what Bronfenbrenner and Weiss (1983) describe as the "deficit model." This orientation produces public policies and programs that are grudgingly offered as alternatives to the adequate exercise of private, parental responsibility for children and youth.

In responding to degrees of dysfunction or pathology, programs provided by both government and the voluntary sector are often fragmented and categorical. They are targeted more at applying a specific remedy to a particular problem than at enhancing the underlying capacities of the individuals involved. If the problem is drug abuse, the remedy is drug treatment programs; if the problem is unemployment, the response is job training; if the problem is inadequate parenting experience, the answer is parent education.

People diagnosed with any one of a set of problems -- inadequate income, mental illness, juvenile delinquency, educational failure -- are treated by distinct and uncoordinated bureaucracies. The particular bureaucracy with which individuals have the first contact is the one to prescribe treatment, often in ways that do not address individuals as complete people, but, instead, attend only to particular needs that are predefined and circumscribed.

Rationale for An Expanded Policy Agenda

We believe that public policy should broaden its focus, beyond responding to child and family dysfunction, to be attentive to enhancing the development of children and youth. Dysfunction must be addressed, of course, but there is, in our view, a place for development on the policy agenda. In fact, balancing the policy agenda by adding a focus on enhancing opportunities for the development of youth would both supplement and strengthen the present approach. It is likely that the active association of adults and younger people in settings designed to enhance development would also serve as an "early warning system" to recognize problems and help young people in ways that are neither categorical nor stigmatizing.

If humane considerations are insufficient to secure a place on the policy agenda for youth development, the interest of society in the development of its young should be clear: the capacities youth develop are dependent on the opportunities available to them and we, in turn, will be dependent on their abilities to execute society's economic, political, and social functions. This broader role for public policy has become especially important because of changes in the contexts of youth socialization: families, schools, peers, the media, and the workplace.

Contexts for Adolescent Development. Families remain the primary context for the development of individuals, but changes in their composition and character have affected their child-rearing capacities. Over the last century, there has been a dramatic decline in the size of both immediate and extended American families.[1] The significance of the decrease in family size for children and youth is that smaller families are likely to include a more intense and unrelieved child-raising obligation for nuclear families and a decrease in opportunities for children to experience cross-generational social interaction and support in their daily lives.[2] The depletion of adult resources for youth also results from the growth in alternative family forms, most notably the single-parent family.[3] And for many

single-parent families, as well as for an increasing proportion of two-parent families, the task of raising children is made more difficult by poverty.[4]

Parents are frequently faced with meeting the demands of both the workplace and home. The increased participation of women in the labor force alters the availability of adult resources for youth.[5] Adult family members of both sexes may have less time, energy, and some would say inclination, to invest in their offspring (Coleman and Hoffer 1987).

Schools are faced with a seemingly ever-increasing and sometimes conflicting agenda, calling for them to provide both solid academic education -- a challenge in itself -- and education of an array of other types, such as consumer education, sex education, driver education, and moral education. Many schools are limited in what they can offer students in another way as well: regardless of the content of education, adolescents are expected to play largely passive roles in hierarchical school structures.

Beyond the resources of families and schools, adolescents are frequently left to the socializing influence of their peers, the media, and, for some, to an increasingly age-segregated workplace. Rather than setting adolescents on the path to responsible adulthood, each of these forces may increase self-involvement (Coleman 1974), undermine education (Coleman 1963), and foster cynicism about the rewards of work (Greenberger and Steinberg 1986).

As an added context for supporting the development of youth, communities are, for the most part, underutilized and little understood.

Communities as Contexts for Individual Development. Three perspectives on communities are important for our purposes. The first reflects a geographic perspective and defines community by reference to place. From this perspective, community is defined as a geographically bounded location within which a group of individuals live: a <u>community of place</u> (Berry and Kasarda 1977, Hawley 1950).[6]

A second perspective defines community as delimited by a particular political

or administrative boundary. Such administrative communities include groups of people who form collectives for administrative or political purposes. These units may include within them a single community of place, several such communities, or only a portion of a spatially defined community. Such political-administrative units include, for example, school districts, legislative districts, federal agency regional divisions, and census tracts. The importance of administrative communities is that they are the boundaries within which bureaucracies create policies that affect institutions and individuals.

A community is also defined in terms of social relations and the shared sentiments these engender (Rubinstein, Kelly, and Maines 1984). From this perspective, the most salient aspect of communities is that they are communities of association. Viewed this way, communities are groups of individuals who share common goals, values, and norms of behavior.

The theme that links these definitions is that communities provide arenas in which people develop their sense of identity and commitment, in which they experience and develop skills at communication and conflict resolution, and in which they learn to balance the tension between self and the social group.

Cognitive and emotional development always takes place within specific social and cultural contexts. Although exactly how specific community contexts affect development is subject to discussion, it is generally agreed that there is a significant interaction between individual development and the cultural and social patterns of daily life (Cole et al. 1971, Laboratory of Comparative Human Cognition 1983, Rogoff and Lave 1984). For example, research from a variety of disciplines suggests that the development of specific intellectual skills is facilitated when the situations in which these are taught and learned are clearly related to the patterns and problems of everyday life. The development of literacy and numeracy are prime examples of this relationship (Cazden et al. 1972, Heath 1983, Philips 1982).

Moral development and an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of

community membership are also influenced by the experiences of daily life. The research literature on moral development suggests that it results from an interplay of maturational processes and everyday experience (Kohlberg 1969). Individuals base their understanding of the substance and dynamics of moral situations on their experience of daily life in their communities (Turiel 1983). Gilligan (1982) argues that experience contributes to the formation of concepts of self, of interpersonal relationships, of responsibility, to modes of thinking about moral-social problems, and to the capacity for feeling joy and empathy.[7]

The developmental environment experienced by adolescents affects their sense of identity and their affective development. In developing a sense of belonging and group identity, children and adolescents are greatly influenced by their participation in peer groups (Coleman 1974, Ianni 1983, Kelly 1977). Kelly, for instance, described how differences in peer group structure and community context contributed to different patterns of interaction among students in two midwestern high schools. Recently, Ianni has found that adolescents turn to their peers when seeking better understanding of their current identities and statuses, but seek out parents and other adults in their communities when they are interested in their futures and in adult society. He therefore thinks that the inclusion of adults in the social networks of adolescents is important.

The research literature shows that cognitive, moral-social, and affective development are facilitated if they take place in settings where developmental tasks are clearly linked to aspects of everyday life. This is more likely to be the case in settings where communities of place, administration, and association are coextensive, where there is continuity in relationships among people who live and work in these settings and consistency between the practices set by administrative bureaucracies and the norms and values of daily life.

Changes in Communities. There is broad agreement that industrialization has changed the nature of communities in fundamental ways. Prior to industrialization,

when people lived in relatively isolated concentrations and communication between areas was difficult, administrative communities, communities of place, and communities of association were often coextensive (McKeown, Rubinstein, and Kelly 1987, Scherer 1972). This fostered relationships in which community members were resources for one another. People interacted with one another in a wide variety of settings and were involved in long-term reciprocal relationships that generated a variety of social supports.

Increasing transportation options and the effects of modern mass communication -- the opportunity for experience that transcends one's area of residence -- have altered the social processes of community development by introducing choice. People can now choose the communities in which they participate in a way that was not possible before. Communities are, as a result, more specialized and impermanent. These specialized communities are less likely than more permanent communities to provide opportunities for individuals to interact in a variety of social roles and settings or to develop the sense of commitment thought to characterize communities (Cohen 1985, Scherer 1972).

We do not mean to convey a naive nostalgia for "traditional, cohesive communities." These, in fact, were sometimes seen as stifling in a number of ways, including, for example, the fact that parents' reputations were likely to be inherited by their children. Whether the change in communities is an asset for people who are mobile and independent is not clear. What is clear is that the loss of cohesion in communities is problematic for people who are not mobile because they are necessarily dependent on the social supports available in their community of place. Those who are naturally dependent on the communities in which they live include the ill, the aged, often the poor, and the young.

The separation of community of place from communities of administration and association means that a geographically constituted community may no longer include a single community of interest charged with meeting the needs of its dependents.

As a result there can develop a lack of "ownership" or sense of responsibility for meeting the needs of children who live within a particular community of place.

To promote the development of individuals able to function in adult roles, communities need to function as facilitating environments for the families and individuals -- particularly the naturally dependent -- who live within them. The capacity of the community of place to provide supports for adolescents and others depends on the development of environments that can generate and sustain supportive forms of association among area residents.[8] The remainder of this paper investigates the ways in which communities do and could function to provide community supports for adolescents.

II. The Availability and Impact of Community Supports for Adolescents

Community supports are both the informal and the organized resources within communities that contribute to the physical, emotional, cognitive, and social development of individuals. Community supports include (1) opportunities to participate in organized, ongoing groups, (2) avenues for contributing to the well-being of others, (3) sources of personal support, and (4) access to and use of community facilities and events including museums, libraries, parks, civic events, and celebrations.[9]

For adolescents, we believe that community supports provide a link between the contexts of family and school and a wider world of issues, events, and people. Through direct experience, community supports offer opportunities to learn practical and social skills and to apply and consolidate academic skills and interests. Community supports provide forums for taking on aspects of adult roles such as the care of others. They offer adolescents chances to test a variety of potential work roles, to seek and supply support across generations, and to develop a sense of competence and responsibility.

Activities involving adolescents' participation and contribution share a variety of common characteristics: they offer opportunities to learn cognitive, physical, and social skills and to belong to a group that provides opportunities for friendship and an enhanced sense of self. In particular, contribution to others can offer individuals opportunities to know that their presence, attention, and the results of their efforts are valued by and valuable to others; and it can provide opportunities to fill the role of an individual on whom others can depend. The benefits of contribution to the contributor also include acquaintance with the requirements and rewards of work. In addition, contribution can provide exposure to major social issues and experience in how to influence the debate and possible outcome of these issues. Sources of personal support can provide adolescents with comparable

benefits -- an understanding of how to seek and find care, concern, information, and material aid from others, as well as models of how to provide such assistance and support in turn.

Cognitive and cultural facilities and events -- including museums, libraries, and civic events such as plays or concerts -- provide exposure to a wider world and offer opportunities to acquire knowledge or pursue interests independently. Parks offer places for physical exercise and recreation and places in which to find both solitude or privacy and opportunities to gather with friends. Civic celebrations provide entertainment and opportunities to experience the diversity of the community in which one lives and, at the same time, to share in a common event, and to develop a sense of group belonging.

The common characteristic of community supports is that they are available non-categorically, without a process of certifying need or service eligibility, and they are provided and available for use voluntarily. What is particularly important is that each form of community support encourages multiple outcomes; all four forms of community support have the potential to enhance each of the capacities in youth that are important for the exercise of adult roles.[10] Thus, for example, organized groups may offer opportunities:

- to participate in sports activities -- enhancing physical vitality,
- to learn cognitive and social skills, to increase understanding of how the world-at-large operates and how to have a wider influence on this world -- increasing resourcefulness, and
- to engage in pursuits of common interest with family members and to meet peers, younger people, and non-family adults to whom friendship and support can be provided and from whom it can be sought -- enhancing caring relationships and a sense of social connectedness.

Similarly, while libraries provide opportunities to enhance knowledge and the ability to pursue interests independently -- enhancing resourcefulness, they also offer opportunities for adolescents to interact with adults to whom they can turn for information and support -- enhancing social connectedness.[11]

The separate contexts for socializing adolescents -- families, schools, peers,

the media, the workplace, and communities -- have distinct functions in enhancing the development of youth. One context cannot take the place of others. Nevertheless, one of the values of community supports is that they can respond and accommodate to the changing structure and function of other socializing contexts for adolescents.

Community supports can respond to shifts in the structure and work patterns of families by meeting both developmental and custodial needs (for safety and supervision) that parents may be unable to provide. In an environment of rapid technological change, community supports can provide access to skills that are outside the knowledge of family members. They can also provide environments in which families can participate in joint endeavors and in which youth and their parents can see each other in roles outside those in the routine family repertoire.

Community supports can provide nonformal settings for the acquisition of knowledge and skills that can solidify academic skills and strengthen adolescents' attachment to academic learning (Cremin 1976, Lipsitz 1986).[12] Recognizing the learning that occurs in out-of-school settings offers the possibility of using community resources as alternatives to the current trend of steadily increasing the obligations schools are required to meet.

In contrast to many of the paid employment opportunities for adolescents involving routine tasks and minimal contact with adults, community supports provide exposure to a greater range of work responsibilities and a wider variety of career options. Through community supports, particularly community service and youth contribution, adolescents can gain a sense of both the demands and the rewards of work and can build a foundation of work-related skills and experience that can serve as a bridge to future paid employment.

Community supports can also provide environments in which relationships with peers and adults develop and flourish. Unlike school settings, in which adolescents may be cast into inflexible stereotypes and in which their interactions with adults

tend to fit the passive, dependent role expected of students, the community context offers adolescents a chance to both broaden and deepen contacts across generations. In the community, adolescents may share endeavors with both age mates and adults, solve problems, assume leadership, speak and act on their own behalf, and give to others.

For each form of community support -- opportunities for participation, avenues for contribution, sources of personal support, and community facilities and events-- we have conducted a literature review across a variety of social science disciplines to learn the following:[13]

- The nature of the community supports and opportunities that exist for 16 to 24 year-olds;
- The extent to which these supports are available within different communities including the distribution of community supports in more as compared to less affluent, stable, or ethnically diverse communities;
- The characteristics of those who use community supports including variations in use by factors such as age, sex, length of community residence, academic standing, and socioeconomic status; and
- The impact of community supports on the youth who participate in them.

In general, we found that very little is known about these issues. We found some suggestive, some intriguing, and some exciting information which makes us think that this area warrants added investigation and notice by those interested in furthering the welfare of youth and the development of capable adults. The following four sections present what we have learned about the nature, extent, use, and impact of community supports for adolescents.

Opportunities for Participation

> M]ost teenagers (63%) consider themselves "regulars" at the mall. . .[they] travel in groups of two or three. . . . They tend to lounge around the seating areas on the first floor of the central court or to lean on the second-floor railings overlooking the court below. . . . For the teenage population, hanging around the mall is less a way to spend money than it is a way of passing time.
>
> Anthony 1985: 310-311

The nonprofit youth organizations in which 16 to 24 year-olds can participate include a wide range of possibilities.[14] There are career groups such as Junior Achievement; character-building organizations such as the Boy Scouts (which for older youth have a strong service component); political groups like Young Democrats and Young Republicans; veterans' organizations, such as Sons of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; hobby groups, including Junior Philatelists of America; and ethnic groups like the Ukrainian Youth Organization and Indian Youth of America (Erickson 1983).

The most recent count of nonprofit opportunities for youth participation (Erickson forthcoming) indicates that there are more than 300 national youth organizations that operate with chapters of varying numbers and size throughout the United States. Two of the largest national youth organizations are the Boy Scouts and 4-H, each with memberships of over four million youth in 1986. Membership in these and seven other major youth organizations (Girl Scouts of America, Boys and Girls Clubs, Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Association, Camp Fire, and Salvation Army) totaled 17 million in 1980, over a third of all elementary- and high-school age youth (La Belle 1981).[15]

Apart from membership in the major organizations, we found no data on the number of youth who participate in national youth organizations. There are, no doubt, also a significant number of nonprofit organizations within individual communities that provide locally organized opportunities for youth participation, but we have found no studies that analyze or describe them.[16] We did find evidence that participation in youth organizations drops off during adolescence. Konopka (1978) found that after age 13 most girls (about 80%) who had belonged to youth organizations no longer did so. The main reason they gave for leaving was that the programs were boring or childish. The most commonly expressed suggestions for improving youth organizations included adding "exciting activities," "more

opportunities to see other places and people," "opportunities to talk about their problems," and "opportunities to discuss or participate in public events."[17]

We also found a number of studies that analyze participation in school-based extracurricular activities, community-based youth organizations, or both. Since our interest is in community resources for young people, we would have looked exclusively at activities based outside the schools if there were sufficient data on these. The following review focuses on community-based activities whenever possible but includes school-based activities as the data dictate.[18]

One study that describes the characteristics of high school students who do and do not participate in community youth organizations, is based on an analysis of the High School and Beyond survey data (Erickson 1982). In this national survey of a stratified random sample of sophomores and seniors in public, parochial and other private high schools, respondents were asked whether they participated in community youth organizations such as sports teams or hobby clubs, vocational clubs such as Future Farmers of America or Future Homemakers, church youth groups, and organizations such as the Scouts or the Ys. About 20% of the students surveyed reported belonging to community youth organizations.[19]

One of the differences between members and non-members is that members of community youth organizations were more likely to come from families whose fathers were better educated or whose incomes were higher.[20] Community youth organization members appear to be academically stronger students: more members (56.5%) than non-members (45.9%) reported average grades of B or better. Members also had higher career expectations: "Fewer youth organization members expect to be in blue-collar occupations and more expect to be in the professions than is true of their fathers" (Erickson 1982: 32).

A greater number of youth organization members reported reading the front page of the newspaper every day or almost every day (49.1% of members compared to 39.5% of non-members). Members were more likely to have formed views on

political issues; about 66% of members expressed some political beliefs while only 56% of non-members did. Members also "think that being a leader in the community and working to correct social and economic inequalities are more important than do non-members" (Erickson 1982: 35). Overall, youth who do not participate in community organizations

> . . . are less likely to engage in other forms of leisure activity than are their active peers (with the exception of watching television). Their educational aspirations are lower, and they are less likely to use family, school personnel, and friends as resources in planning careers. . . . They have poorer self-concepts and less of a sense of control over the events of their lives . . . 45% plan to end their schooling with high school graduation or less (Erickson 1982: Appendix 1).

In another study of youth participation, Ladewig and Thomas (n.d.) found that former members of 4-H clubs and former members of other youth organizations attained higher levels of education and were more likely to be involved in civic activities and political organizations in adulthood than non-participants. The descriptive studies reviewed thus far offer much information, some of it quite suggestive, but they do not make clear which of the differences between participants and non-participants, if any, are the direct result of involvement in youth organizations.

Several studies have investigated the impact of participation in school and community activities on adolescents and the consequences of this participation in later adult life. This research indicates that participation is related to increased self-esteem and reduced alienation among adolescents (Conrad and Hedin 1982). A number of researchers have found that participation in high school extracurricular and community activities appears to have a positive effect on students' educational goals and their attainment of these goals (Hanks and Eckland 1978, Otto 1975, Otto and Alwin 1977, Spady 1971). While these studies control for some contributing factors--such as socioeconomic status, intellectual ability, and academic performance--there may be other factors, including personality characteristics and motivation, that are also responsible for these outcomes (Otto 1982).[21]

Several longitudinal studies have found that adolescent participation in school extracurricular and community-based youth activities is related to later adult membership in voluntary organizations and the extent to which adults are politically active (Hanks 1981, Hanks and Eckland 1978, Otto and Featherman 1975). Using data from a national longitudinal survey of high school sophomores, Hanks and Eckland (1978) found that adolescent participation in school extracurricular and community activities was related to increased adult participation in voluntary associations over a fifteen-year period. Their analysis showed that adolescent participation had a stronger positive relationship to adult participation in voluntary organizations than adult education, occupation, or income (Hanks and Eckland 1978). This implies that patterns of associational behavior learned in adolescence carry over into adulthood. The authors suggest that participation provides "a setting for the rehearsal of interpersonal and organizational skills" (Hanks and Eckland 1978: 488) that can be applied to membership in adult associations.

In a similar study, Hanks (1981) found that participation in organizations designed to achieve a social objective (i.e., "instrumental organizations" such as student government or Students Against Drunk Driving) was related to increased participation in political campaigns and discussion of political issues by youth two years after their high school graduation. Participation in organizations that focus on activities as ends in themselves (i.e., "expressive organizations" such as athletics or hobby clubs) had a much weaker relationship to later political participation by youth.

Similar to the concept of adolescent participation as "rehearsal" for later adult involvement, Hanks suggests the use of a "mobilization theory" to explain the importance of participation during adolescence. He hypothesizes that during adolescence "involvement in voluntary associations provides members with attitudes, incentives, information, and other personal skills and resources necessary for

effective political action" (Hanks 1981: 221).*

We conclude this review of what we have learned about participation with a fact relevant to the policy debate: in a study of the use of free time by somewhat younger students in Oakland California, Elliott Medrich and his colleagues documented that most students from more affluent families supplemented their use of public facilities and services with access to an array of private opportunities while children from lower income families were more likely to be restricted to the use of facilities and services that were publicly provided.[22]

Avenues for Contribution to the Welfare of Others

> The average student completing the 12th grade has spent nearly 15,000 hours sitting in classrooms. Somewhere in there the law of diminishing returns comes into play. For instruction to remain vital, effective, and relevant, we need to vary the settings and styles in which it is delivered. What is learned needs to be applied and tested in a more demanding and realistic fashion than by words in a test booklet or marks on an electronic sheet.
>
> Conrad and Hedin 1987: 55

Youth can contribute to the well-being of others in many ways. In this section we highlight examples of youth contribution that illustrate this diversity.

Youth can and do provide direct help to their peers through activities such as tutoring, counseling, crisis intervention, mediation, and mentorship.

> Students trained in mediation and peer counseling skills are settling disputes among their peers in SMART projects -- School Mediators' Alternative Resolution Teams -- operating in five high schools and junior high schools in New York City (Dullea 1987).

Youth can work with younger children in day care centers, schools, and hospitals; they can aid the elderly in their own homes and in nursing homes.

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* The Appendix summarizes studies on the impact of community supports cited in this and the following sections including a brief description of the samples, methodology, and significant research findings.

Youth in St. Paul, Minnesota are participating in an oral history project, visiting senior citizens and recording interviews about their lives (Minnesota Department of Education 1987).

In New York City, the East Harlem Youth Action Program provides adolescent escorts for senior citizens in housing developments (National Crime Prevention Council 1985).

Youth can become involved in identifying and solving community problems such as reduction of crime and drug use. Young people run Neighborhood Watches and other traditional crime prevention programs. They teach self-protection to older people and elementary school children, clean up graffiti, repair vandalism, and patrol crime-troubled areas.

The Tampa, Florida Police Department's Teens on Patrol program puts 16 to 19 year-olds into public parks, recreation centers, swimming pools, and retirement centers for five hours each weekday during the summer. Teenagers assist in preventing injuries, protecting people and property, and maintaining the peace (National Crime Prevention Council 1985).

High school students in Madison, Wisconsin's Positive Youth Action Team are teaching elementary students about how to prevent and deal with sexual assault, the dangers of alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide prevention (ibid).

Youth can provide manpower for human service agencies and environmental projects, participating in youth corps and conservation corps projects, neighborhood clean-up efforts, and human services management.

The New York City Volunteer Corps (CVC) pioneered the large-scale use of youth corps members in delivering services to the homeless, the elderly, the disabled, and other dependent populations. CVC volunteers receive stipends and educational assistance in exchange for their service to the city (Branch and Freedman 1986).

A student organization at the University of California, Berkeley is linking students with various community service organizations, including tutorial and educational programs, lawyer referral services, senior citizen projects, refugee and immigrant projects, prison programs, health care and nutrition programs, information centers, and other social service activities (Ventresca et al. 1987).

A guide to volunteer opportunities for youth in Cook County, Illinois is published by the Cook County Sheriff's Office. This directory describes youth service opportunities in 180 local agencies, and provides tips for

youth on identifying worthwhile projects in their communities and choosing opportunities that fit their talents and interests (Hinely et al. 1986).

Youth can become involved in the world of business through youth enterprise projects.

A "Rent-a-Kid" program in St. Paul, Minnesota is matching youth who want to work with jobs that need to be done in the community. The project gives young people a chance to earn money and there reportedly has been an observable decrease in vandalism and in the number of kids hanging around on the streets of the city (Minnesota Department of Education 1987).

Youth can participate in the debate on social policy issues.

Children's Express operates seven news bureaus in the U.S. and overseas staffed by youth reporters and editors. These bureaus produce newspaper articles that provide a youth perspective on issues of current importance. Reports written by Children's Express are published in newspapers across the country (Silha and Kornbluh 1985).[23]

The CityKids' Foundation in New York City brings kids together to work on issues they consider important. For example, CityKids conducted a survey of youth opinion on the subject of emotional abuse and held public hearings on the subject (Susan Doi, personal communication 1987).

Youth contribute to others in informal ways by assisting friends and neighbors and in formal programs by encouraging and structuring community service activities. Some high schools, colleges, religious organizations, business and civic groups, and voluntary and public agencies offer formal opportunities for youth to contribute to others. While there is a good deal of literature on youth involvement in structured community service programs, particularly those in high schools and colleges, less is known about youth involvement in informal service to others. We have found several examples of youth acting on their own to provide service to others, but, most of these acts outside large, established organizations go unnoticed. A few are recognized by Giraffe, a national organization that recognizes the accomplishments of people willing to stick their necks out:

A 13 year old boy in Philadelphia stood up to racism by testifying in court against an adult neighbor he saw painting a racial slur on a house that a black family wanted to buy (Conover 1987).

In 1984, a teenager started an organization that planted over one million trees to help clean up the air in the Los Angeles area. His group, The Tree People, has gone on to start similar efforts in other areas (Ann Medlock, personal communication 1987).

A Gallup survey reported that 43% of the youth aged 18 to 24 and 48% of all people over 18 in the U.S. had served as volunteers at some point during 1985. Periodic surveys by the Gallup Organization show that between 1980 and 1985 the percentage of the 18 to 24 age group involved in charitable activities declined by 11 points, despite fairly steady levels of volunteering among people in all other age groups (Independent Sector 1985).

A 1985 survey of 443 Chicago area high school students discovered that 27% were currently involved in either informal activity or a formal program offering help to others, another 48% said they would consider becoming involved in similar kinds of volunteer activity, while 26% were uninterested (Popowski 1985). Based on a 1984 survey of 204 private and public high schools in the United States, Newmann and Rutter (1986) estimated that 900,000 students, or 7% of the total 1984 secondary enrollment, participated in high-school-based community service programs. In contrast, 52% of high school seniors were involved in team sports and 34% were involved in the performing arts in 1982 (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1984).

Newmann and Rutter (1986) also estimated that 27% of the public and private high schools in the U.S. offer some type of community service program for students.[24] The majority of the high-school-based service programs are voluntary, and most are viewed as extracurricular activities. There has been some debate over whether high schools ought to require student participation in community service activities or promote voluntary service among youth. Community service is a requirement for high school graduation in roughly 5% of the secondary schools in

the nation (including schools in Atlanta, Detroit, Fairfax County, VA, and South Brunswick, NJ); another 9% of the secondary schools offer academic credit for service experience (Newmann and Rutter 1986). Harrison (1987) has suggested that provision of opportunities for service to others is a growing trend in secondary education; if so, the growth is in voluntary programs (Newmann and Rutter 1986).

Large, well-established service programs exist in some major universities, along with many grassroots, student-run volunteer efforts. It has been estimated that between 15% and 25% of all college students regularly engage in some form of voluntary public service (Toufexis 1987). Many colleges and universities offer academic credit for community service; some offer stipends, fellowships, or grants to students engaged in public service; and a small percentage include community service as a formal graduation requirement (Ventresca et al. 1987).

In addition to service programs based in high schools and colleges, thirteen states and a dozen cities and counties have established full-time service corps in which young people work on projects including recreational programs for physically handicapped and disabled persons, tutoring for refugee children, shelters for battered women, homemaking services for the homebound elderly, fire prevention, disaster relief, energy conservation, and park development. Approximately 90,000 young adults have participated in these programs since 1981 (Youth Service America 1987).

There is little systematic research on the characteristics of young volunteers. We do know that approximately 60% of the high school students who participate in voluntary community service programs are female (Newmann and Rutter 1986). Boys are more likely to have paid work or to be involved in after-school sports, and some boys do not consider it masculine to serve in settings such as day care centers, nursing homes, hospitals, or lower elementary grades (Harrison 1987). Similarly, Popowski's (1985) study of Chicago area high school students found that youth interests were consistent with traditional gender roles: female students were

more interested in working with younger children, senior citizens, and the handicapped; males were more interested in coaching, crime prevention, and giving blood. The same study found that academic performance was positively correlated with high school students' participation in volunteer service and extracurricular activities, although this does not mean that participation caused better academic performance.

It is not clear how community service opportunities are distributed within and between communities. Newmann and Rutter (1986) found that private Catholic and alternative public schools are more likely to offer community service than regular public schools and that larger schools and those with large minority enrollments are more likely to promote service than small schools and those with predominantly white enrollment. Some authors raise the issue that volunteering may be a middle-class luxury and that low-income youth often cannot afford to participate without pay. However, Alonzo Crim, the Superintendent of Schools in Atlanta, has suggested that community service activities are especially important in empowering adolescents in low-income communities who are used to having society do things to and for them (Harrison 1987).

It seems clear that youth have an untapped capacity for contributing to the well-being of others. In addition, Branch and Freedman (1986) suggest that involvement in service to others can enhance youth's sense of the importance of education, service, and work. While there is some literature on the impact of contribution on youth, little of it is based on rigorous research. In addition to anecdotal accounts of youth service efforts and their impact, a small number of studies have been conducted using pre- and post-tests and comparison rather than control groups. Although these studies add to our knowledge about the potential impact of service activities on youth, researchers have not yet ruled out other factors (e.g., motivation, self-selection) that may account for differences between young volunteers and their comparison group peers.

There is some evidence that adolescents' involvement in community service is related to reduced feelings of alienation and isolation from the rest of the world (Calabrese and Schumer 1986), that it encourages them to become more involved in their communities, and lets them know they are needed (Boyer 1983). Reports from program administrators and anecdotal evidence suggest that service experiences can help young people develop a better understanding of how the community works, how problems arise, and what can be done about them (Boyer 1983, Harrison 1987). Newmann and Rutter's (1983) quasi-experimental study of community service programs in eight high schools found that one-semester service experiences had modest effects on students' sense of social competence and responsibility to the wider community, although these experiences did not appear to affect other affiliations or political participation. Similarly, based on a comparison of pre- and post-test measures within a sample of 150 young volunteers, Hamilton and Fenzel (1987) noted improvements in adolescents' attitudes toward social responsibility, in their developing sense of themselves, in the knowledge and skills they exercise in voluntary activities, and in their interest in volunteering in the future. It appears that service experiences are more likely to be effective when coupled with opportunities for discussion and reflection on these experiences (Conrad and Hedin 1981, Danzig and Szanton 1986, Newmann and Rutter 1983).

Several studies indicate that volunteering in one area may increase youth interest in other service activities. For instance, participants in the California Conservation Corps (CCC) reported increased involvement in donating blood and in informal community service work after they had been involved in the CCC and in comparison to non-participants (Wolf, Leiderman, and Voith 1987).[25] An evaluation of the Young Volunteers in Action Program suggests that this program promoted a "spirit of volunteerism" among participants: a majority of the program participants reported that they would continue to volunteer in the future and would recommend volunteer work to friends (ACTION 1986).

Peer tutoring programs appear to have educational benefits for both the tutor and those tutored (Gerber and Kauffman 1981). Student tutors have also demonstrated small but significant gains in personal functioning and moral development (Cognetta and Sprinthall 1978). School administrators report that a peer mediation program has cut the suspension rate in half in one New York City school; in other cities, peer counseling and mediation efforts are credited with reducing violence and discipline problems in public schools (Dullea 1987).

Case studies suggest that service experiences can cultivate useful job skills including punctuality, reliability, the capacity to see a task through to completion, and the ability to get along well with others (Harrison 1987). Pre- and post-assessments of participants in the Young Volunteers in Action Program suggest that these young people gained a better understanding of their career objectives, improved their ability to work with supervisors and community members, and decreased their need for supervision (ACTION 1986).

Several studies have investigated economic correlates of service. Evaluation of the California Conservation Corps showed that this program was associated with short-term economic benefits for participants (Wolf, Leiderman, and Voith 1987). Other reports suggest that voluntary service experiences may have later educational and economic benefits for youth as well since these activities are looked on with favor by college admissions offices and employers (Harrison 1987).

Sources of Personal Support

> Typical American adolescents spend only five minutes a day alone with their fathers, and half of this time is spent watching television. Moreover, typical American adolescents spend only about 40 minutes a day alone with their mothers, an hour a day with both parents, and about 15 minutes a day with other adults -- for a total of about two hours a day in the company of mature individuals. But almost all this time is spent unwinding from the tensions of school or work and in such repetitive maintenance activities as eating, shopping, or cleaning.
>
> Csikszentmihalyi and McCormack 1986: 417

Youth derive support from relationships with other people and by drawing on their own internal resources (Bryant 1985). Interpersonal or social support is the emotional sustenance, information, and instrumental aid available through relationships with others.[26] It includes both the knowledge that aid will be forthcoming in times of need and actual use of this assistance. In addition to resources furnished through social interaction, youth draw on their own internal assets. In this section we look at the intrapersonal and interpersonal supports available to youth -- support youth derive from themselves and from others -- and at what is known about the impact of these supports.

Intrapersonal support refers to the capacity to find solace, strength, knowledge, and instrumental resources within oneself. These internal resources can be nourished by interaction with any of the four forms of community supports that provide youth with opportunities for autonomy as well as relatedness to others and for reflection, relaxation, and the pursuit of independent goals and interests such as hobbies and skill-building activities. Further, the ways in which emotional, informational, and instrumental support are provided by others can help or hinder youth's development of these internal resources. We believe that the development of intrapersonal supports is particularly important for adolescents who are in the process of becoming increasingly independent.

The types of relationships through which interpersonal support can be supplied are many. They vary in intensity and duration from casual and time-limited or

task-specific encounters to intimate, long-term involvements, and may offer emotional, informational, or instrumental aid. Formal sources of social support include structured programs or groups created for recreational, social, educational, spiritual, or therapeutic purposes. Informal supports are more spontaneous and unstructured, such as the resources provided by friends, siblings, parents, grandparents, neighbors, shopkeepers, teachers, acquaintances, and others. Informal social networks can provide a sense of security and continuity for youth if they have an internal map of how their network is structured and organized and know whom they can turn to within it for a variety of kinds of help. Implicit informal support structures exist in communities in which there is a sense of cohesion and belonging and may be lacking in areas characterized by high geographic mobility, crime, and distrust of others (Costello 1987).

Emotional support is concern, empathy, reassurance, liking, love, and emotional sustenance from others. It involves listening and affirmation of one's worth as a person. Emotional support for youth is often available through informal relationships with friends, relatives, neighbors, teachers, and other community members. Formal sources of emotional support include self-help and support groups and mentoring programs.

> Talkline is a 24-hour telephone warmline for teenagers in the Chicago area. It is staffed by community volunteers. Teens call the Talkline to talk about concerns such as running away, pregnancy, family or employment problems, sex and dating (Lacey Antonson, personal communication 1987).

> Rainbows is a peer support program that helps youngsters cope with divorce or death. In over 1,000 public and private high schools, these groups offer opportunities for youth to examine their experiences and feelings about divorce or death and to develop a sense that they are not alone or at fault (Karen Nottoli, personal communication 1987).

Informational support is the provision of advice, guidance, or information about an individual's actions or the environment in which he or she lives. This includes instruction on the development of skills or acquisition of resources, modeling of adaptive behaviors and coping strategies, and feedback on the results and

appropriateness of one's behavior. This type of support is available to youth informally when people in a social network provide guidance on resolving conflicts with others, advice about educational and career opportunities, or information on resources in their community. Formal sources of informational support include efforts to disseminate knowledge about community resources, materials on skill-building or problem-solving strategies, career- or academically-oriented mentoring programs, organized peer tutoring efforts, and homework hotlines.

> Detours is an "organization for kids who are going places". The program publishes attractive, humorous, easy-to-use maps to help youth find their way around Boston independently and safely, using public transportation. These colorful guides highlight free and inexpensive things to do along the route (Lefstein 1982).
>
> Career Beginnings helps minority and disadvantaged high school seniors pursue higher education or full-time employment with career potential. Sponsored by a consortium of local educators and business people in 24 sites across the country, this mentoring program establishes a one-to-one relationship between a student and a professional person (Center for Youth Development and Research n.d.).

Instrumental support is the provision of material aid, goods, and services. Family members and friends often provide youth with instrumental assistance in the form of a ride home from school, a place to go to when no one is home, or a meal when needed. Formal instrumental supports for youth include safe ride programs, safe houses, health care services, and financial or material aid from public and private agencies.

> The Chicago Police Department recruits adults who are usually at home after school and can provide a haven for children and youth who need a safe place to go. Volunteers are often identified through local PTAs; once they pass a police check, they become part of the "safe house" program. These homes are identified by bright stickers placed in a door or window (Diane Thompson, personal communication 1987).
>
> In a suburb of St. Paul, Minnesota, two youth groups -- Students Against Drunk Driving and the Explorer Scouts -- operate a Safe Ride program for young people who are intoxicated by drugs or alcohol and for youth who do not want to ride with someone who is. Safe Ride volunteers are trained to assess their passengers' medical condition and to obtain emergency medical services when necessary (Judith Erickson, personal communication 1987).

Youth often receive several different types of support from one source. For instance, in peer counseling programs in schools around the country, youth help their peers resolve conflicts with others, assist in crisis situations, and work to prevent more serious problems like teen suicide and drug abuse (Dullea 1987). These efforts are aimed at supporting youth as people (emotional support) while also providing specific information and opportunities to develop better problem-solving and coping skills (informational support). Similarly, mentoring programs like Big Brothers/Big Sisters foster one-to-one relationships between adults and youth and provide youngsters with access to information on the world of work and adult life.

We have identified a wide array of sources of personal support for adolescents, but have found little research on the availability and use of these supports. Similarly, information on the impact of social support on youth is scant and the results of available studies are equivocal (Cauce, Felner, and Primavera 1982).

Several studies examine adolescents' perceptions of support from their parents and peers. Burke and Weir (1978) found that, among adolescents from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, girls reported that they were more likely to turn to their peers than to their parents for support; girls also reported experiencing significantly greater life stress and poorer emotional and physical health than did boys. Wilks (1986) found that older adolescents rated their relationships with family members as more important than friendships, although problems were more frequently discussed with close friends. Parents' views were seen as more important in making difficult, future-oriented decisions while friends opinions were more valued for less important, short-term decisions.

A few studies focus on describing the social networks of young people. For instance, Garbarino et al. (1978) found that the congruence of child and parent perceptions of the child's social network, the role of adults in the child's network, and the size of the network varied by type of community and the child's age.

Urban children reported fewer people to whom they could go for help with a problem than did those living in suburban and rural areas. Older children reported less involvement with adults.

The research evidence on the impact of supports for youth is less than clear (Boyce 1985). Sandler (1980) found that parental support (defined as the presence of two parents versus one parent) and sibling support (the presence of older siblings) were associated with lower levels of maladjustment in inner-city children. Conversely, Gad and Johnson (1980) found no evidence that social support played a significant role in mediating the effects of stress among adolescents from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds, but their study indicated that adolescents from low-income families, regardless of race, experienced higher levels of stress and maladjustment.[27]

Studies of adolescents in low-income, inner-city areas report differential and sometimes negative relationships between perceived support from various sources and adolescents' adjustment in several spheres. Cauce, Felner and Primavera (1982) found that higher levels of perceived involvement with peers were related to poorer academic achievement and greater absenteeism. Conversely, in a study of pre-adolescents, using measures of actual versus perceived relationships, Cauce (1986) found that reciprocal relations among friends were positively correlated with school competence, social competence, and perceived self-competence.

Bryant (1985) found that children's perceptions of available social support were related to their enhanced social and emotional functioning in relatively stable and low-stress communities. Moreover, a broad-based as opposed to limited network and informal as opposed to formal sources of support were more predictive of positive social-emotional functioning in middle childhood.

Werner and Smith's (1982) longitudinal study of youth who grew up in chronic poverty and stressful living conditions found that resilient youth (those with a more internal locus of control, a more positive self-concept, and a more nurturant,

responsible, and achievement-oriented attitude toward life) reported having a greater number of informal supports than did youth with serious coping problems 80% of the resilient youth felt that support and counsel from friends and parent figures helped them significantly. Both resilient youth and those who developed coping problems reported that they preferred to seek help from their informal network of family, friends, neighbors, and other community members rather than from more formal sources of support.

Beyond the research on support for youth, there have been a large number of studies which suggest that social support may reduce the effects of stress and the risk of physical illness and psychological distress. The weight of this evidence is a matter of debate and the processes by which support may reduce the ill effects of stress or promote physical and mental health are unclear.[28] In spite of its positive connotations, it appears that social support may have positive or negative effects on health and well-being, depending on the nature of the support and the circumstances under which it is offered. Actions that are intended to be supportive may be viewed by the recipient as intrusive, overprotective, or demeaning. Preliminary evidence indicates that in order for social support to have a positive effect on the recipient the exchange must be perceived as reciprocal (Antonucci 1985).

Research on the relative influence of various kinds of support (emotional, informational, and instrumental support) is in its infancy, and findings of differential effects of support from distinct sources (family, friends, and others) are not well understood. Finally, there is some evidence that informal and formal supports operate in different ways (informal relationships tend to be more reciprocal and functionally diverse while formal supports are more instrumental and purposeful in nature) and that one form of support should not be substituted for the other (Hoch and Hemmens 1987, Wireman 1984).

Community Facilities and Events

> Shopping tops boys say teen-age girls in a survey of 100,000 girls, aged 12 to 19, by Donnelley Marketing. About 93% said shopping was their No. 1 pastime.
>
> Wall Street Journal, 5/7/87: 1

This section discusses the fourth, and what may be the least obvious, category of community supports: community facilities and events. This set of institutions and events -- including libraries, parks, museums, public concerts, plays, and celebrations -- are ordinarily thought of separately and are often not conceived as playing an instrumental role in youth acquisition of capacities needed for the exercise of adult roles. We think that these community institutions and events are important because they represent opportunities for the development of physical, social, and intellectual qualities needed in adulthood. We have included a discussion of community facilities and events in this paper although the relevant literature we have been able to draw on is less extensive in this area than for the three other forms of community supports.

Community facilities and events can be accessed independently and spontaneously by youth. Parks, for example, offer youth a chance to enjoy open land for a variety of activities. Csikszentmihalyi and Larson (1984) found that adolescents rate parks as the public place where they feel the greatest sense of personal autonomy. In addition to providing open space, many city park districts sponsor sports programs and classes for all ages, including a diverse array of activities from softball leagues and gymnastics classes to musical talent searches and baking competitions. Museums serve an educational and recreational function and, while not always free, they often admit people without charge on one day a week. Some cities have museums designed for children, and one, the Boston Children's Museum, has designated a portion of the museum for teenagers. Included in this space are a music room, computer exhibits, a performance stage, and repeating

slides called "No Easy Roses," depicting local high school students discussing peer pressure, racism, sex, and drugs. In addition, many museums, including the Boston Children's Museum and the Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago, offer high-school and college-age youth opportunities to work as museum guides and interns.

Public Libraries. We focused our literature review, and the balance of this section, on public libraries. Because libraries are a widely available resource for a significant number of youth and offer access to information that may enhance the acquisition of knowledge by youth and others, we assumed that greater research evidence on the impact of library use might exist.

Research shows that adult library users tend to be more active and more actively involved in their communities than non-users (Gallup Organization 1976, Lynch 1987). Adults who use libraries, for example, are more likely to go to museums, lectures, or sporting events and are more likely to volunteer (Lynch 1987). Adult library users are more likely to be female, college graduates, and parents of school children and to have household incomes between $20,000 and $50,000. Adults who do not use public libraries tend not to use libraries at all (Gallup Organization 1976).[29]

While librarians believe that adolescence is the time in which adult patterns of library use are established (Downen 1979, Razzano 1985), we found little written on the availability, use, or impact of library services for young adults.[30]

One study of Indiana public library use showed that 49% of all students using public libraries were high school students (Wilder 1970). A separate study (Razzano 1985) indicates that the majority of teenagers appear to use libraries to do homework and research, and are more frequent users of reference materials than adults. Their use of non-circulating reference materials may be one source of the commonly held belief that young adults use libraries less than other groups.

Another study of library use involved somewhat younger children. In her research on summer learning loss among sixth graders in Atlanta, Barbara Heyns

(1978) found that reading over the summer was related to increased student scores on standardized achievement tests given in the fall. She found that factors associated with summer reading -- in order of importance -- were whether the child used the public library, the child's sex (girls read more), the family's socio-economic status, and the distance between a child's home and the library. In effect, she found that, for sixth graders in Atlanta, summer reading improved students' vocabulary and achievement test scores and that libraries were their main source of summer reading material.

Many libraries, however, fail to develop any program in young adult services or to hire a librarian trained in the young adult services area. Young adult library services, collections, and resources are more limited and less well organized than either adults' or children's services (Razzano 1987). Further, in times of budget constraints young adult services are often the first to be cut (Downen 1979, Starr and Talbot 1980).

On the question of how evenly libraries are distributed among communities, a Chapin Hall study showed that in Chicago neighborhoods in which the median family income is below $25,000, the average number of children per public library is twice the average number of children per library in neighborhoods with a median family income above $25,000 (Testa and Lawlor 1985); that is, there are twice as many children per library in lower income neighborhoods as there are in more affluent communities. Similarly, more than two times as much money is spent per child on the libraries in more affluent communities as compared to communities with lower family incomes.[31] The impact of this discrepancy in the provision and financing of libraries is magnified by evidence that low-income children rely more heavily on publicly provided resources than do their upper-income peers (Medrich et al. 1982).

An obstacle to enhanced use of libraries by children and youth is lack of knowledge about library programs and services. Medrich and his colleagues found that:

> Schools and neighborhood park and recreation services reached the majority of households with at least minimal information about their after-school or weekend activities. By contrast, three out of four surveyed parents reported that they had heard nothing about offerings of the local library or museum (Medrich et al. 1982: 177).

Some public libraries offer creative library services to young adults. Innovative programming for young adults has included (1) opportunities for adolescents to provide support across generations, including storytelling for children and serving as "computer tutors" to children and adults; (2) programs for consolidating academic and reading skills, such as summer reading programs, individualized reading lists generated through a computer-administered questionnaire, and a program on writing term papers; (3) opportunities for learning practical life skills, such as budget planning ("Thrifteen") and hunting safety; and (4) chances for exploring social or emotional issues relevant to adolescents, such as a program on teenage suicide (Kruger 1983, Wilson 1987).

Such innovative programs have professional endorsement in the library community, but they lack funding. In a survey of administrative librarians, Downen found that 69% of these librarians think there should be outreach to potential young adult library users outside the library building (Downen 1979). Eighty-one percent more strongly advocated expanding personalized services for youth than expanding library collections; for example, 72% favored walk-in tutoring services. Almost all supported increasing the availability of materials on subjects of interest to adolescents including information on career options, on pregnancy, and on sexually transmitted diseases (Downen 1979).

Public libraries can provide a dynamic source of support for young adults:

> At a time in their development when human beings are absorbing many new ideas, and experiencing emotions, situations and questions which will affect their adult lives, young adult programs offer them opportunities for discussions and weighing of alternatives. Ideas acquired from reading, viewing and listening in the world around them need airing. Problems need solving. Library programs offer young adults a constructive forum for doing just that (Pedak 1978: 50-51).

Public libraries offer youth an opportunity to pursue interests, acquire knowledge, and enhance skills; they provide a place to meet and work with peers and other people; and they offer access to the personal and professional support of librarians. It is likely that youth who develop the habit of library use will retain it into adulthood.

Other forms of community facilities and events can offer similar benefits to youth. Although we suspect that parks, museums, and cultural events are environments in which young people's capacities can develop and flourish, the literature on the availability and impact of these resources for youth is especially meager. More investigation is needed of the existence, use, and impact of these community supports for particular youth and for the communities in which they live.

III. Policy Issues and Agenda for Research and Experimentation

Policy Issues. The evidence we have gathered indicates that community supports can further the development of capacities needed in the exercise of adult roles. The importance of these outcomes argues that supports should be widely available to youth in a variety of communities including communities that are both more and less affluent. We believe that, to the extent that community supports are not being provided, they should be augmented. However, we do not have a guide for systematic policy in this area.

The results of the Grant Commission's work on employment point to research findings of sufficient weight to enable the Commission to recommend the expansion of a set of particular programs. We do not believe that is the case for community supports. There is not yet sufficient evidence to indicate what works, for whom, and in what situations.[32] Establishing a deliberately drawn policy for generating and sustaining community supports is dependent on answering a series of questions concerning the distribution, use, and impact of community supports and the administrative processes that facilitate their delivery -- questions that we do not have sufficient information to answer.

We believe that this report and others the Grant Commission has sponsored on communities have shown that there are a multitude of interesting and innovative ways in which communities can contribute to the assumption by youth of work, family, and civic responsibility. However, in an environment of limited resources, which community supports and which forms of these supports ought we to push for? The answer to this question depends on an understanding of the impacts achieved by particular community supports. A base of empirical knowledge is needed from which to answer a set of questions including:

- What impacts do specific community supports produce, for whom, and under what circumstances?
- What is the magnitude of the impact of community supports in relation

the effects of other influences on youth?

- What constellation and level of community supports are required to have a positive impact on the development of youth?
- What costs are required to achieve these impacts?
- Which forms of community support can be replicated apart from the social contexts in which they were generated?

As part of a research agenda to identify the impact of particular community supports, it is important to have more complete, systematic answers to additional questions -- beyond those on impact -- which we hoped a literature review of existing information would, but did not, provide. These questions include:

- What community supports, both formal and informal, exist for youth?
- How do the nature and distribution of supports vary among different communities including those that are more or less stable, affluent, or ethnically diverse?
- How many and which youth do and do not use particular community supports?

  What community supports are available to and used by particular sub-sets of youth including:

  youth who are in school or college, youth in the workforce, and youth who have no major institutional affiliation, that is, youth who are out of school and unemployed,

  youth newly arrived in communities, and

  youth with problems of physical or mental illness or youth who have been involved with other major service delivery systems such as youth who are or were in substitute care or those involved with the juvenile justice system?

- What are the determinants of the use and non-use of community supports including:

  knowledge of the existence of community supports,

  cost, both direct (fees charged) and indirect (equipment needed, transportation expenses),

  degree of parent involvement required, such as advance registration or required parental participation,

  predisposing youth characteristics such as prior interest in a subject or personality factors such as an inclination to be social, and

peer or parental pressure?

- What is the nature of the sponsorship of existing community supports?

  To what extent are supports provided informally or by formal organizations?

  What is the mix of national versus local sponsoring organizations and what are the benefits of each?

  What is the size, source of funding, and longevity of these organizations?

Another set of questions that needs to be addressed in developing a concerted policy for community supports deals with the ways in which community supports can be generated and sustained on a scale sufficient to make a difference. Questions of the auspices, administrative structure, and financing of community supports are complicated by the fact that we are not considering just one program idea or one notion that can form a particular categorical program. Instead, community supports entail a range and variety of opportunities that need to appeal to different people, in different stages of development, and to be appropriate for different communities. Given the diversity of needs, interests, and outcomes community supports must encompass, questions about how to mobilize community supports include:

- Are community supports generated and maintained best as individual efforts created in individual communities or do they flourish better as part of a network of similar programs within individual communities or across a range of communities?

- Who might take the lead in stimulating the development of supports in a range of communities and who might do the best job of sustaining them: neighbors, volunteers, professionals, and, if professionals, which ones? Which professions have a serious stake in the generation of community supports for children and youth, and which are relatively free of an occupational bias toward trouble and dysfunction?

To date, community supports have been predominately private, voluntary efforts. It is possible that these are the most effective auspices for the creation and sustenance of community supports. Yet there are communities that do not have the resources -- either in dollars or leadership -- to support the development of an infrastructure sufficient to create and maintain an array of community supports at a

scale needed to make a serious difference. A key set of questions concerns whether the development and sustenance of community supports is a private or a public-governmental responsibility, or a mixture of the two:

- If the provision of community supports ought to be through private, voluntary efforts, where can resources be found to sustain community supports at a level sufficient to make a difference?

  Should a quasi-public corporation or organization be created to assist in stimulating and sustaining community supports?

- Should government play an active role in the provision of community supports?

  Do we actually need to create a social care and community support system like our educational system or our health care system to foster the development of these kinds of supports?

- How could government effectively support the informal, voluntary, associational nature of many existing and potential forms of community support?

  Would government involvement bring with it rigid formulas and bureaucratic approaches that are antithetical to the existence of community supports?

A final question addresses the strategy used to produce an infrastructure necessary to generate the variety of community supports that should be available to enhance the development of youth. One strategy for generating community supports is based on the premise that youth are a special case. This strategy asserts that youth have a special claim on public and private resources because what they learn and become is in part dependent on the opportunities they encounter and because we, in turn, will be dependent in the future on the capacities they develop. The erosion in traditional supports, such as changes in the composition and work commitments of families and the cohesion of communities, makes this special claim of youth even more compelling. We think this argument is valid. We question whether it is a strategy that will work in trying to mobilize support on a scale needed to make a difference to individual youth in individual communities in the face of the number of youth and communities in which supports must be generated and sustained if they are to have a significant impact.

An alternative to the strategy of advocating a "special case" for youth, is based not on pleading the case for youth, as opposed to children or the elderly or the handicapped, but to consider the common needs for supports of all individuals naturally dependent on community of place. Youth are not alone in benefiting from the development of capacities such as physical vitality, resourcefulness, the ability to sustain caring relationships, and a sense of social connectedness. Children, the mentally or physically handicapped, the chronically ill, the elderly, and individuals who may be more or less temporarily dependent because of illness or unemployment all need to acquire these capacities or to have the opportunity to maintain capacities they have already developed.

It is possible that the provision of community supports can be thought of and generated not as categorical responses to separate dependent populations but as ways in which communities can assist individuals with common interests and needs. The operation of a warmline for individuals home alone, assistance with information on how to get around a metropolis, or opportunities to contribute to the welfare of others in a community could be organized across age groups and causes of dependence.

While this shift would require a change in focus and a change in the structure and function of current service providers, the constraints on available resources make it potentially more feasible for communities to mount and adequately finance a common infrastructure than competing systems. Moreover, there are social as well as financial benefits in meeting the shared needs of individuals and their families or primary caretakers, including the building of community cohesion.

We are not arguing here for a strategy based on the concept of dependent groups providing assistance to each other in ways that are mutually beneficial, such as the young assisting in hospitals or day care centers, thereby both providing a service to another dependent population and receiving experience in filling adult roles. We are proposing something more than this concept of "double social utility"

implies. We are trying to suggest a view of what communities should provide to assist those in their populations who are, in one way or another, in need of support. The existence of community supports designed to meet the shared interests of a variety of individuals and their families should create shared standards of obligation and behavior. They should serve as visible symbols of the reciprocal supports communities provide for and expect from their citizens.

Agenda for Research and Experimentation. In order to further construction of deliberate policy concerning community supports a program of research, experimentation, and demonstration is needed. At least three lines of research should be pursued: First, an empirical base of knowledge about the distribution and use of existing supports must be developed. Second, careful analysis of the relationship between these supports and the development of capacities in youth and adulthood needs to be conducted. And finally, demonstration and evaluation of alternative forms of delivering community supports should be pursued. In the remainder of this section, we consider each of these lines of research and suggest some of the ways in which this work might proceed.

Such research would aid in constructing policies and in identifying the structure of financing mechanisms. It would include the development of an empirical base of knowledge about what supports are available in communities, who uses them, who provides them, and which support needs are and are not being met. Information of this kind can be generated through descriptive studies and cross-sectional surveys in a diverse set of communities. Surveys that combine interviews with providers of community supports, with youth who do and do not use them, and with their parents can provide both an inventory of existing resources within communities and an understanding of the disjunctures between what is available, what is known about, what is used, and what is wanted.

Additional insights about the distribution, sponsorship, and use of community

supports may be available through analysis of administrative records maintained by community and youth organizations. Analysis of this administrative data may provide information on the availability of certain resources within and across various communities as well as data on the characteristics of participants (age, sex, race/ethnicity), the nature of their involvement (degree and duration of participation), and the attributes of local providers (sponsorship, staffing including parents and volunteers, budget, and source of funds including participant fees).

Secondary analysis of existing survey data--particularly of national, longitudinal surveys--could be useful in charting trends in youth participation over time, in building profiles of youth who do and do not participate in community activities, and in documenting the nature of their involvement. However, existing social surveys have examined youth involvement only in a small subset of community facilities and opportunities for participation, contribution, and support. To our knowledge there have been no national studies of youth's access to and use of a wide array of community supports.

A second line of inquiry central to developing a coherent policy concerning community supports is research on the impact of particular forms of support. Surveys can gather subjective assessments of the effects of various community supports from providers, parents, and youth participants. Beyond these self-reports, however, longitudinal or panel studies should be used to examine the differential effects of specific types of community supports for particular youth and for the communities in which they live. For instance, existing studies of the impact of participation tend to look at outcomes for participants across all youth organizations and do not distinguish between opportunities that are more or less beneficial for youth. It would be useful to begin to identify which outcomes are associated with participation of what kind (degree and duration of involvement), for whom, and in what kinds of activities (physical, cognitive, or social skill development, group or individual endeavors, adult or youth structured activities).

Because opportunities for research using random assignment to experimental and control groups are rare, it is important to begin to find other ways to identify and control for personality and environmental factors that also may be related to observed outcomes. Studies that include careful assessment of the differences between youth who do and do not use certain community supports (including individuals' initial motivation to participate) are one way to begin to isolate rival causal factors and those that may interact with community supports to produce observed outcomes. To some extent statistical controls can be used to examine the relative importance of program and non-program factors. Further empirical work should include multivariate analyses of the characteristics of young participants, the nature and degree of their involvement in various types of community supports, and the range of impacts that are associated with the use of these supports.

In addition to impact studies, research should begin to address the question of how particular community supports affect participants, that is, what the processes are that mediate the impact of community supports. Toward this end, qualitative analyses are needed of the ways in which youth become engaged in supportive relationships and successful programs and the elements that produce and sustain benefits derived from community supports.

A third distinct program of research should involve demonstration and evaluation of alternative models for generating, sponsoring, financing, and delivering of community supports. For example, demonstration projects could be used to evaluate the deliberate involvement of government or the private sector in the generation of community supports. In addition, pilot projects could be planned to test and evaluate strategies like the development of community supports to meet shared needs of a variety of community members rather than as specific supports for youth.

Research on community supports is an arena in which the large array of existing and innovative forms of community support could provide the basis for a

series of natural experiments. We know, for example, that innovative efforts are underway in a number of cities involving coalitions of government, business, the voluntary sector, and citizens to address the positive development of youth. These initiatives include City's Children: 2007 in Minneapolis and Seattle's Kids' Place. Careful research concerning their outcomes and impact would be useful in guiding the development of systematic policy concerning the generation and sustenance of community supports.

While the foregoing describes an ambitious and complex agenda, we urge attention to both its scale and complexity since definitive answers to questions regarding the nature and impact of community supports will not be found in any single study or in studies using a single methodological approach. Both increased knowledge and additional debate are needed. We hope this paper will stimulate both.

APPENDIX:
Description of Selected Studies on the Impact of Community Supports on Adolescents

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
PARTICIPATION					
Conrad & Hedin 1982	Non-random sample of youth participants in 27 exemplary experiential education programs during the 1978-1979 school year (N=4,000).	Instruments administered at the beginning and end of each program (length of programs varied).	6 of the 30 programs had comparison groups, composed of students in non-experiential classrooms.	Descriptive statistics, t-tests, multiple regression analysis.	Students in experiential education programs showed improvements in self-esteem, moral reasoning, personal and social development; their attitudes toward adults and toward involvement in the community became more positive.
Hanks & Eckland 1978	Non-random sample taken in 1970 of respondents to a 1955 survey of high school sophomores (N=1,627).	No repeated measures. Data collected in a 1970 survey included retrospective reports of subjects' activities in 1955.	Within sample comparison of subjects who had participated in school extra-curricular activities.	Multiple regression and path analysis controlling for: SES, sex, 1955 measures of academic aptitude and sophomore class rank.	Youth participation in school extra-curricular activities was related to later educational attainment and participation in adult voluntary organizations (net of the effects of control variables); not related to adult occupation or income.
Hanks 1981	10,245 respondents to a 1975 follow-up NLS survey of youth who had been high school seniors in 1972. The NLS uses a probability sample of the U.S. population.	Panel data from NLS surveys taken in 1972 and 1975.	Within sample comparison of subjects who had participated in instrumental or expressive voluntary activities and those who had not.	Multiple regression and path analysis controlling for: SES, academic aptitude, class rank, self-esteem (at T1 and T2), sex and race.	Youth participation in voluntary associations in 1972 (particularly in instrumental rather than expressive groups) was related to discussion of political issues, participation in political campaigns, and (to a lesser extent) voting behavior in 1975 (net effects).

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
Ladewig & Thomas n.d.	Stratified random sample of U.S. adults, screened to create 3 subsamples: former 4-H members (N=709), former members of other youth organizations (N=743), and non-participants (N=309).	No repeated measures. Data were collected in telephone interviews in 1985.	Former members of youth organizations other than 4-H and adults who had not participated in any youth organization.	Descriptive statistics, Chi-square, t-tests, ANOVA, correlation, regression and path analysis (used to describe differences within groups; no controls for differences between groups in age, SES, race, or place of residence).	Former 4-H members and members of other youth organizations attained higher levels of education than non-participants. As adults, participants were more likely to be involved in civic activities and political organizations, they were more likely to be employed and reported higher incomes than non-participants.
Otto 1975	Non-random sample of 17 year-old men enrolled in Lenawee County, Michigan high schools in 1957 (N=340).	Panel data from a 1957 survey and a 1972 telephone follow-up. Independent variables measured in 1957, dependent variables in 1972.	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Multiple regression and path analysis controlling for: 1957 measures of SES, academic ability, and grade point average.	Adolescent boy's participation in extra-curricular activities in 1957 was predictive of their educational attainment in 1972 (net of the effects of control variables).
Otto 1976	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Adolescent boy's participation in extra-curricular activities in 1957 was related to 1972 levels of educational and occupational attainment, income, participation in voluntary organizations, and involvement in the political process (net effects).

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
Otto & Alwin 1977	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Same as above; also controlled for reported influence of significant others.	Adolescent males' participation in athletics in 1957 was predictive of 1972 levels of educational and occupational attainment and income.
Otto & Featherman 1975	Same as above, but N=442.	Same as above.	Same as above.	Multiple regression and path analysis controlling for: 1957 measures of SES, academic ability, and grade point average.	Participation in extra-curricular activities in 1957 was related to 1972 participation in voluntary organizations, involvement in the political process, and frequency of contacts with friends in adulthood; but not to reported feelings of self-estrangement and powerlessness.
Spady 1971	Census of 297 senior boys from 2 suburban, west coast high schools in 1963.	Data from 1963 survey of students and parents, academic records, and aptitude test scores; 1967 mailed follow-up survey.	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Descriptive and non-parametric statistics including Weighted Net Percentage Difference technique, controlling for: 1963 measures of perceived peer status, actual peer ratings, grades, motivation (i.e., interest in difficult subjects).	Students involved in extra-curricular activities had higher educational goals in 1963 and were more likely to have finished 1 year of college by 1967 than non-participants. Students whose primary extracurricular activities were in social service or student government had higher educational goals in 1963 and higher educational attainments in 1967 than those who were active in varsity sports, social activities, or performing arts.

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
CONTRIBUTION					
ACTION 1986	Random sample of volunteers aged 12-23 in 18 of 20 second-year Young Volunteers in ACTION projects (N=302); subjects' supervisors (N=151); and project directors (N=18).	On-site interviews with volunteers, supervisors, and directors in June 1985, followed 4 months later by telephone interviews with project directors. Pre-program data from retrospective reports.	No control or comparison group.	Descriptive statistics, crosstabs, correlation analysis, t-tests.	Subjects reported that they would continue volunteer service in school and as an adult, and would encourage others to volunteer. Comparison of retrospective and current reports suggests that youth made gains in understanding community service, ability to work with others, development of career objectives, willingness to learn, and reduced need for supervision.
Calabrese & Schumer 1986	The first 25 9th grade students to volunteer for a 10-week school community service program. 12 of these students continued the project on their own for an additional 10 weeks, while the other 13 terminated involvement after the first 10-week session.	Data collected at 3 points in time: pre-program (T1), post-program (T2), 10-week follow-up (T3). Included were measures of: alienation, attendance, discipline, and grade point average.	Comparison group of another 25 students who volunteered for the same program.	One-way ANOVA of repeated measures, t-tests.	Students in the service program for 20 weeks showed reduced levels of alienation, isolation, and discipline problems; no change in absenteeism or grades. Among students in the program 10 weeks, discipline problems and alienation were reduced (at T2) but these changes did not last (no difference at T3); no change in absenteeism or grades.

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
Cognetta & Sprinthall 1978	Non-random sample of 10th through 12th grade students in a 12-14 week elective class and practicum on cross-age teaching (N=17).	Pre- and post-tests of ego development (Loevinger) and moral development (Kohlberg).	Comparison group of 26 students in regular social studies classes.	t-tests for within-group differences between pre- and post-tests.	Subjects in the treatment group improved on tests of ego and moral development (no change in comparison group).
Hamilton & Fenzel 1987	Non-random sample of volunteers aged 11-17 in community improvement and child care projects in 10 New York counties (N=73).	Pre- and post-tests of social and personal responsibility.	No control or comparison group.	ANOVA, t-tests, multiple regression analysis controlling for differences in pre-test scores; and qualitative analysis of interview data.	No change in attitudes on personal responsibility; kids in community improvement projects developed more positive attitudes toward social responsibility for needy people than those in child care projects. 90% of subjects said they were likely to continue volunteer work. Volunteers seemed to gain knowledge of themselves and others; and developed vocational and interpersonal skills.
Newmann & Rutter 1983	Non-random sample of participants in well-established community service programs in 8 public high schools (N=158).	Measures of social development administered at the beginning and end of one semester.	Comparison group of about 20 11th and 12th graders in each school (N=156).	ANOVA, multiple regression analysis controlling for: pre-test scores, SES, GPA, and opportunities for development.	Program appeared to be related to modest increases in social competence and sense of non-school responsibility. No differences between program and comparison groups in sense of school responsibility, political efficacy, future affiliation or future political participation.

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
Wolf et al. 1987	Stratified random sample of participants in the California Conservation Corps (CCC) during 1983-1984 (N=943).	Interviews conducted when participants joined the CCC and at 6 or 9 months after they left the CCC.	Matched comparison group of 1083 youth who sought employment services from a state agency and were eligible for the CCC but did not apply. Groups were matched on sex and race/ ethnicity.	Multiple regression analysis, controlling for: SES, race, and gender.	Program participants' earnings were higher than non-participants during the program but not in the year after they left the CCC. The program appeared to have positive impacts on physical self-concept and attitudes and behaviors related to nontraditional jobs for women, recycling, awareness of environmental problems, donating blood, and informal community service.
PERSONAL SUPPORT					
Bryant 1985	Non-random sample of 168 children aged 7 and 10 in non-metropolitan and rural northern California in 1977-79. Subjects had continuous contact with 2 parents and little geographic mobility; most (98%) were white, and none were living in poverty.	No repeated measures. Children were taken on a neighborhood walk and asked to describe their involvement with personal, home, and community resources. Several measures of social-emotional functioning were used.	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Chi-square, multivariate analysis of covariance, univariate ANOVA, correlation and hierarchical regression analysis controlling for: sex, age, sex of sibling, family size, and SES.	Child's perception of support was related to social-emotional functioning. Broad-based neighborhood and extended family networks and informal versus formal sources of support were related to positive social and emotional functioning. Ten year-olds made better use of social support than did 7 year-olds.

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
Burke and Weir 1978	Non-random sample of 93 male and 181 female students, aged 13 to 20, in 3 Toronto area high schools.	No repeated measures. Data on stress, social support, life satisfaction, and well-being.	Within sample comparison of male and female subjects.	Chi-square, t-tests.	Females reported greater life stress and poorer emotional and physical well-being although they reported discussing a greater number of problems with peers.
Cauce et al. 1982	Random sample of 9th and 11th graders in 3 inner-city public high schools in a northeastern city (N=250). 67% of the subjects were black, most were from low-income families.	No repeated measures. Data from school records and indices of self-concept and perceived social support.	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Factor analysis, multivariate and univariate ANOVA.	Perceived peer support was related to lower school performance (GPA) and greater absenteeism. Perceived helpfulness of support from distinct sources (family, friends, and formal supports) varied by sex, age, and ethnicity (e.g., females saw peer support as more helpful than did males, older teens rated formal supports more helpful than did younger teens, and black youth rated family members more helpful than did non-blacks).
Cauce 1986	Non-random sample of black, low SES, inner-city 7th graders in 1 northeastern middle school (N=98).	No repeated measures. Data from question-naires on peer group values, social support, views of self and others, and socio-metrics.	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Network analysis, correlation, multivariate hierarchical regression analysis controlling for sex.	Perceived peer support and number of reciprocated best friends were correlated and both of these variables contributed independently to school competence, social competence, and perceived self-competence (i.e., self-esteem).

Reference	Sample	Repeated Measures?	Control or Comparison Group?	Analytic Methods	Significant Findings
Sandler 1980	Non-random sample of kindergarten through 3rd grade inner-city children who were experiencing adjustment problems (N=71).	No repeated measures. Data from indices of stress among children and parents' ratings of children's adjustment problems.	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Correlational analysis.	Presence of older siblings and two parents in the household were related to lower levels of stress among children.
Werner & Smith 1982	Census of children born in Kauai in 1955 (N=698). Most subjects were from low-SES families.	Longitudinal study with data points in the perinatal period, at birth, at 1, 2, 10, and 18 years. Data from: interviews, home visits, medical and psychological exams, school and social service records.	Within sample comparison of subjects who developed serious behavior or learning problems at some time during their first 20 years (N=204) and those who did not have these problems.	Descriptive statistics, crosstabs, Chi-square, t-tests, correlation, and discriminant function analysis.	Compared with youth who developed coping problems, resilient youth (those who had more internal locus of control, more positive self-concept, more nurturant, responsible, and achievement-oriented attitude toward life than others) were more likely to have a multi-generational network of kin and friends in adolescence.
COMMUNITY FACILITIES					
Heyns 1978	Stratified random sample of 6th and 7th graders in Atlanta public schools in 1972 (N=2,978).	Achievement test scores at 3 points in time over a 1-year period, plus parent interview data (e.g., on children's reading habits and library use).	Within sample comparison of subjects.	Multiple regression analysis, controlling for: prior achievement test scores, SES, household size, race, and sex.	The number of books read during the summer was related to library use (net of the effects of the control variables on reading). Fall achievement scores were not related to summer library use once the amount of reading was controlled. SES was highly correlated with summer learning.

Notes

1. For example, children born in 1910 had about 5 siblings, 20 aunts and uncles, and 40 cousins. Children born in the 1970s, by contrast, have about two siblings, 8 to 12 aunts and uncles, and about 16 cousins (Bane 1976). Their counterparts born in the 1980s are likely to have only one brother or sister (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986a).

2. Moreover, the availability of extended family members does not ensure their engagement in supporting youth. For example, Cherlin and Furstenberg (1986) document the lack of frequent contact between grandparents and grandchildren. In a survey of a national sample of grandparents, among grandparents who live within an hour's drive of their grandchildren, only 26% described their relationship with their grandchildren as "involved", that is, a relationship "in which the grandparent and grandchild had seen each other at least once every two or three months during the past year. . .and in which there were high levels of both exchanges [interaction] and parentlike behavior" (Cherlin and Furstenberg 1986: 77).

3. In 1960, 9% of children lived with one parent; in 1985, 23% did (U.S. Bureau of the Census 1986b). According to one projection (Bumpass 1984), 49% of children born between 1977 and 1979 will spend some time in a single-parent family. For children whose mothers did not finish high school, the percentage likely to spend some time in a single-parent household is 68%, for children of teenage mothers it is 78%, and for black children it is 86%.

4. In 1982, for example, 36% of people in female-headed households were in poverty, as opposed to 10% of people in other households (Bianchi 1986). Poverty among female-headed households increased 27% between 1979 and 1986 (William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship Forthcoming). Poverty is also increasing among married-couple households. As the Grant Commission notes, during the same time (1979 to 1986), poverty among all other families, predominately married-couple families, rose 21%.

5. In 1950, 18% of mothers worked; today, 57% do so (Bianchi 1986).

6. This approach looks mainly at the formal social organization of a specified community of place, however, it also acknowledges that an understanding of community depends upon informal aspects of social relationships, including social and cultural systems (Trickett et al. 1985).

7. Gilligan characterizes these differences as female-male differences but she underscores that this association is not absolute. Rather it relates to the social experiences out of which the contrasting "voices" develop.

8. Bronfenbrenner, Moen, and Garbarino's (1984) insightful review of the literature on community-level effects on individual development and family functioning posits that community influences are greater than the sum of the effects of their subsystems. Research on community-level effects is not covered in this paper; our review of the research is directed at understanding characteristics and processes common to communities which present opportunities for enhancing the development of youth. It is important, particularly prior to

undertaking empirical research, to understand the ways in which individual communities can influence the processes that occur within them.

9. After an initial foray into the literature on resources for youth, we developed this typology of community supports to structure our further investigation into questions concerning their availability, use, and impact. We do not mean to suggest that these are mutually exclusive categories. In fact, one of the significant aspects of community supports is that individual youth can find more than one form of support within the same setting. Thus, for example, a single activity may offer opportunities to participate in a group, to contribute to the welfare of others, and to find personal support. The categories are distinct only in that they reflect different components of the supportive relationship between adolescents and communities. We also do not claim that these categories are exhaustive. Although our work to date does not indicate areas we have overlooked, empirical research should be used to reconsider and refine these categories.

10. We do not mean to suggest that all community supports are beneficial for all youth. Certainly the impact of community supports on youth will depend upon the quality of available resources, the nature of youth involvement with community supports, and characteristics of participants (e.g., age, developmental stage, emotional state). Further, community supports are likely to function differently in different communities, interacting with other formal and informal systems (e.g., families, schools, social service agencies, and social networks) to produce both direct and indirect effects on youth and the environment.

11. In times of stress and the lack of other resources, libraries also provide shelter. Libraries increasingly are being turned to for shelter by the homeless and by children and youth between the time that school gets out and parents get home.

12. Joan Lipsitz's work has been particularly important in the identification of this issue (see Lipsitz 1986). In addition, while focused on an age group younger than the 16 to 24 year-olds of concern in this review, her work on early adolescence has been instrumental in pointing out the importance of communities and community resources for young people (see for example: Lipsitz 1977, 1980, 1983).

13. Literature for this review was gathered in two ways. First, we contacted approximately three dozen academicians and practitioners who could tell us about the relevant literature and practice in fields such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, human development, human ecology, social work, public policy, and human services. We discussed our interests with these individuals and asked them to recommend both published works and other people who could lead us to relevant work. Second, we searched the University of Chicago's computerized card catalog, the National Union Catalog, the ERIC database, and periodical indices using subject headings such as community, community service, social support, libraries, and so on to find additional materials. Because of restrictions in available time, this paper is limited to a review of published research. A next step in understanding community supports is to extend this analysis by encompassing the findings of unpublished reports and research in progress.

14. This section does not address (1) informal opportunities for youth participation (such as opportunities organized by a group of neighborhood parents or by youth themselves), or (2) activities available through private, for-profit providers. We chose to concentrate this review on what is known about non-profit opportunities for adolescents in part because, while only a limited amount is known about youth participation in opportunities provided through non-profit organizations, our early forays into the literature indicate that even less is written on what is available to adolescents informally or through the for-profit sector. It should also be noted that our early work included a search for youth activities sponsored by religious organizations. We found very little data on these programs, perhaps because they are usually initiated and organized at the local level.

15. The use of the term "member" can denote various degrees of involvement and participation depending on the definition used by each organization. For example, one organization may count youth who participate in each separate activity as members while another may count as members youth who join the organization regardless of the number of activities in which they are involved.

16. We are aware of one locally-organized opportunity for youth in Chicago which is worth noting because, while this diversity of activities may not be widely available, the Youth Commission run by the village of Bellwood indicates that such an array is possible. The Bellwood Youth Commission provides opportunities for youth aged 13 to 19 such as:

- A teen recreation center
- A sex education program
- Free feature films, teen dances, talent shows, car washes
- Basketball & volleyball twice a week at a local gym
- Ski trips to Lake Geneva
- Trips to plays in Chicago and to Great America
- A youth employment service
- Lawn care & snow removal programs
- Volunteers to help with community projects. (Southern 1986: 33)

17. Many youth organizations are aware of this phenomenon and, in their program development, aim to attract and retain adolescents.

18. We have not included a description of extracurricular activities in schools, in part, because of our concern that opportunities for youth are highly centralized in schools and that, for some youth, interest in participation may be limited by the mandatory environment schools represent and opportunities to participate limited by the influence of factors such as academic standing.

19. La Belle (1981) found that over one third of all youth belong to youth organizations while the High School and Beyond data indicate that about one fifth of high school sophomores and seniors participate in the activities of these organizations. We suspect that the difference in these numbers is because La Belle's data includes the participation of younger children and that this discrepancy reflects the decline in participation among adolescents.

20. In contrast, a disproportionately large number of members and leaders of vocational organizations, such as Future Farmers of America or Junior Achievement, came from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (Erickson 1982).

21. The studies cited here are based on panel survey data and the use of structural equations to model causal relationships between participation in adolescence, other independent variables, and outcomes in adulthood. Since these models rely on passive observation and correlational methods of analysis, they do not rule out alternative hypotheses regarding the nature of the relationships between variables (Cook and Campbell 1979, Otto 1982). Additional research is needed in order to clarify the nature of the relationships between youth participation and outcomes in adulthood (Luther Otto, personal communication 1987).

22. Medrich found that 43% of children living in neighborhoods with the lowest level of public resources used public resources exclusively; 68% of these children came from families with annual incomes under $5,000. In contrast, in neighborhoods with the highest level of public facilities and resources, only 32% of children made exclusive use of those public opportunities. Medrich uses the term "public resources" to refer to investment in local parks, the number of extracurricular activities in schools, the size and proximity of libraries, and the level of children's services in local libraries (Medrich et al. 1982: 183).

23. In addition, Children's Express is developing a half-hour weekly TV news magazine--reported by kids--which will air during prime-time on PBS stations beginning in the fall of 1988.

24. Other surveys have resulted in substantially higher estimates: 51% of the respondents in Levison's (1986) survey of private schools and 70% of the public schools responding to Harrison's (1987) survey reported that they had some type of community service program. We think that these estimates may be marred by response bias: Regarding the Levison survey, other research has shown that private Catholic schools are far more likely to offer community service programs than regular public schools (Newmann and Rutter 1986), and the former would have been over-represented in Levison's sample of private schools. The association of Harrison's work with the Carnegie Foundation--a well-known proponent of community service in secondary schools--could have influenced respondents' decisions to participate in the survey: principals in schools with service programs may have been more likely to return the questionnaire that those in schools that did not offer service opportunities.

25. However, the California Conservation Corps program apparently had no lasting effect on participants' involvement in promoting the protection of natural areas, even though this was directly related to program activities (Wolf et al. 1987).

26. Some typologies of social support (e.g., House 1981) include a fourth category, appraisal support, which is information that is relevant for self-evaluation. We believe that this type of support is encompassed within informational support or emotional support or both, depending on the type of information offered and the emotional circumstances in which it is conveyed.

27. Both of these studies suffer from serious conceptual and methodological problems: Sandler's study used troublesome and somewhat simplistic definitions of support (i.e., the presence of household members, rather than perceived or actual qualities of the relationships among them). The Gad and Johnson study did not distinguish between distinct sources of support, so that differential effects of various types of support on adolescents' adjustment and adaptation could not have been detected.

28. It is not clear whether social support acts as a buffer against the negative effects of stress, or has a direct effect on well-being, or both. In addition, the direction of the relationships between support and certain social and personality factors is not clear; it may be that both the perception that support is available as well as involvement in personal relationships are the outcomes of psychological and social factors rather than their cause (Costello 1987).

29. Only 7% of the adults who did not use public libraries reported using any other library.

30. Some library systems define "young adults" as 12 to 18 year-olds, and others define them as 14 to 18 year-olds. In all systems youth aged 19 and older are counted as adult users.

31. This study found that public parks are also unequally distributed in Chicago. For instance, in neighborhoods with a median income under $15,000, there are 1,030 children per acre of public parks. In neighborhoods where median income exceeds $25,000, there are 120 children per acre. Forty-two percent of athletic fields in the lower income communities need repair, whereas only 12% in the more affluent areas do (Testa and Lawlor, 1985: 115).

32. Thus far, most of the empirical work in this area has been aimed at describing the correlates of youth involvement in community supports. While this work has been useful in furthering understanding of the adolescents who use community supports and the benefits they may derive from them, the nature of youth involvement in and the differential effects of community supports are not clear.

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A COMMENTARY

on **Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Robert A. Rubenstein and Julia Littell with Brian Britt and Carol Yoken's**

COMMUNITIES AND ADOLESCENTS: AN EXPLORATION OF RECIPROCAL SUPPORTS

by **Diane Hedin**

Joan Wynn and her colleagues have done a thorough review of the extant scholarship on community supports and influences on adolescents. One of their conclusions is that "community supports can further the development of capacities needed in the exercise of adult roles...and that supports should be widely available to youth in a variety of communities" (p. 41). Yet, they do not call for a major expansion of opportunities for youth to participate in informal education, community service, youth organizations, mentoring programs, and the like because, they argue, this body of research is not sufficiently specific or complete to delineate the most successful programs and interventions for particular populations. Of these two conclusions, I find their evidence makes a stronger case for the former than for the latter.

In other words, their conclusions are that being in Scouts or 4-H, participating in extra-curricular activities, providing needed community service, playing a sport, visiting museums to see good art and hear high-quality music, using the library's resources, and having supportive relationships with adults in the community are good for young people. This is probably not startling news to most of us. In fact, one wonders if there is any reasonably alert parent or teacher who wouldn't encourage the children and youth in their care to participate in these "community supports?" They are, almost by definition, viewed as helpful to the healthy development of young people and even may be said to be good "in and of themselves." One doesn't ordinarily judge a theatrical performance or art exhibit

on its capacity to improve the cognitive or ego development of the audience so much as whether it was moving or creative or well-acted.

That said, it's still a bit deflating to find that such a comprehensive review of the relevant literature only confirms what most concerned adults already know and that the authors argue that too little is known to provide much guidance in the struggle to develop communities which can more effectively nurture our young people. Two key questions need to be raised:

1) Are the authors correct in their conclusion that not enough is known to set forth a comprehensive policy and program agenda?

2) Are the recommendations they offer the right ones for creating communities that will help youth become more competent adults?

I agree with Wynn and her colleagues that there is not definitive empirical evidence for precisely delineating the particular programs required for positively impacting the diverse populations of American youth. But we must remember that the topic of informal education and youth programming has received little attention. Empirical investigations of the ways in which the wider community, outside schools and families, contribute to a young person's development has not been of much interest to researchers and academics. Wynn highlights fewer than 25 studies which shed any significant light on this question. With such a modest level of empirical research available, one might ask whether researchers are the appropriate group to offer guidance to communities on how to promote healthy youth development. Perhaps those who have designed and implemented innovative and successful community supports would be in a better position to tell us what has been and should be done.

Second, I think that Wynn and her colleagues are too conservative in their conclusions about the efficacy of some of the programs they reviewed. My reading of the research about extra-curricular school programs, community service, and

community youth organizations, such as 4-H, Boys and Girls Clubs, and YMCAs is that participation in these activities has a positive impact on a young person's social and personal development, and that the factors which make some programs more successful than others are well established. (I will discuss this in more detail later in this commentary.)

Thirdly, the state of the art in assessment techniques about complex phenomenon, such as whether community supports can help youth develop the capacities needed to fulfill the roles of worker, parent, and citizen, is woefully inadequate to the task demanded of them by Wynn, et.al. This review of the literature consistently indicates that the evidence about the impact of community supports on a variety of outcomes is inconclusive, but never really confronts this fundamental dilemma--that there are not techniques and methodologies capable of definitively answering "what works, for whom, and in what situations," the golden fleece Wynn and her colleagues seek.

As the National Academy of Education (1987) recently warned:

> Those personal qualities that we hold dear--resilience and courage in the face of stress, a sense of craft in our work, a commitment to justice and caring in our social relationships, a dedication to advancing the public good in our communal life--are exceedingly difficult to assess. And so, unfortunately, we are apt to measure what we can and eventually come to value what is measured over what is left unmeasured.

It is neither surprising nor unreasonable that the authors would recommend that the remedy for this lack of empirical evidence be an ambitious and complex research agenda. After all, that is what social scientists always recommend. Yet, it strikes me that their recommendations will accomplish far too little too late. I am reminded of Jacob Varela's (1978) insight that the real goal of the social sciences is not to solve social problems, but to study them. He points out that the social sciences have often been accused of slavishly emulating the physical sciences, but he argues that they haven't emulated them enough. He notes:

> Physical scientists know about the murky connections between "laws" that apply to ideal conditions and their real world applications. They know that not every solution can be tested with control groups and pristine laboratory rules: Engineers do not build two Golden Gate bridges to see which one will work best. They build the best bridge they can based on the principles they know.

I recommended that we follow Varela's call to build the best system of community supports based on our current theoretical and practical knowledge about healthy youth development, even though we don't have definitive empirical evidence. I fear that the research agenda laid out by Wynn, et al., even if completed, will still not fully answer the question of what works best for whom and in what situations. I think we know enough now to greatly improve the community's capacity to support and nurture our young people.

My optimism that our current knowledge about healthy young development is sufficient to create good policy and practice stems partially from a recent experience with a project entitled, CITY'S CHILDREN: 2007, in Minneapolis. It is an attempt to develop a vision for the kind of environment we want for all our children in 20 years, and further to develop goals and plans for achieving that vision, at 10, 5, and 1 year intervals. The structure is to have three groups of 30 people each, working on such a vision for pre-school, school-age, and adolescent populations. Each committee is made up of a broad cross section of the community--teachers, parents, youthworkers, human service providers, police, business persons, judges, lawyers, researchers, etc.

For the most part, the participants are not professionals in the field of child or adolescent development, the kind of background one would assume would be necessary for such a task. Yet, they have been able to develop a sophisticated and comprehensive statement about healthy youth development and spell out the indicators for such development having occurred. The full statement is far too long

to include here, but an example of what is being accomplished might be helpful. One component of the broad vision that "the community promotes the full development of every child in the areas of physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and moral/spiritual growth" is that "each adolescent values learning and is motivated to learn and to explore his/her full potential." One of the goals toward accomplishing that vision is that neighborhoods have "multi-media gymnasiums" where adolescents could "dabble in" or pursue in some depth dance, science, art, radio and television, computers, etc., along with more traditional sports activities.

This is just one example from a long list, but it does suggest that pooling the knowledge and experience of a lay group with a strong interest and commitment to children and youth can produce meaningful and powerful youth policy. I would recommend that this approach be replicated in any community that desires to develop a comprehensive plan to enhance the reciprocal supports that adolescents and communities provide each other.

But once the specific vision or policy about how to help youth become economically self-reliant and personally and socially responsible is stated, Wynn would argue that we don't know which specific program or intervention should be used to successfully implement the policy. Clearly, we don't have definitive answers, but I would argue that the evidence for the effectiveness of certain programmatic approaches is quite strong, particularly community service programs, internships, peer education and peer counseling programs, and participation in school-based extra-curricular activity and in youth organizations. While the studies tend not to use highly elegant research designs and often rely more on comparison than true control groups, the general direction of the findings are quite consistent.

Furthermore, I probably start with a different assumption than Wynn does. I doubt that there will be any major methodological breakthroughs in measuring the

outcomes reviewed in her paper in the near future. So that the evidence we have now for the effectiveness of these programs is not likely to change substantially.

For example, a series of studies on community services programs in which adolescents are in new roles such as teacher, tutor, counselor, coach, friendly visitor, and the like does show a positive impact on the participants' moral development, self esteem, social and personal responsibility, attitudes towards adults and others, career exploration, and problem-solving capacity (Conrad and Hedin, 1981, 1987; Hedin, 1987; Newmann and Rutter, 1983; Sprinthall and Collins 1983; Mosher, 1979). A series of studies on participation in extra-curricular activities and non-school youth organizations consistently show that members of these organization have higher educational aspirations and attainment and are more likely to be involved in community and political activities as adults (Otto, 1982; Hank, 1981). Even though we cannot parcel out the effect of motivation and personality characteristics on these outcomes, nevertheless, they are so consistent that we can conclude that they do increase community participation and educational achievement.

We even have evidence about what differentiates more successful informal education and youth organizations for adolescents from less effective ones. While this is far from an exhaustive list, the key characteristics of successful youth programs are:

1) Youth are involved in real community needs and problems and engage in activities which are not solely self-centered.

2) Youth have genuine rather than token involvement in decision-making, and they receive the training and skills in communication, negotiation, and persuasion necessary to act effectively.

3) Program goals are consistent with the primary developmental task of adolescents: identity achievement, which includes making ideological and career commitments.

4) There are collegial, egalitarian adult-youth interactions, with young people having some oversight over the kind and type of adult involvement.

5) Adult leaders assume a helping role, setting the state activities and decisions.

6) Leadership tasks are shared or rotated among youth rather than allowed to become the sole responsibility of one person.

7) Youth capitalize on the special talents and resources of their age group,qualities such as energy, idealism and enthusiasm (Hedin & Eisikovits, 1982; Kohler, 1982)

The agenda for research and experimentation that I would recommend would be similar to Wynn's call for demonstration and evaluation of alternative models for developing and delivering community supports. The opportunity to evaluate natural experiments taking place in several cities across the country is particularly appealing. As my comments have obviously implied, Wynn's first two research agendas--delineating the existing supports and analyzing the impact of these supports on the development of young people seem far less cost-effective and timely. I believe we know enough to launch a series of major demonstrations across the country which will allow us to immediately use the substantial practical wisdom, empirical evidence, and common sense we currently possess for helping our youth become self-reliant and socially connected.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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A COMMENTARY

on **Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Robert A. Rubenstein and Julia Littell with Brian Britt and Carol Yoken's**

COMMUNITIES AND ADOLESCENTS: AN EXPLORATION OF RECIPROCAL SUPPORTS

by **Judith B. Erickson**[1]

> **It may relieve the mind to break forth in moments of irritation against "the folly of the coming generation," but whoso pauses on his plodding way to call even his youngest and rashest brother a fool, ruins thereby the joy of his journey,--for youth is so vivid an element in life that unless it is cherished, all the rest is spoiled.**
>
> Jane Addams 1912: 140

> **Forced through tradition**
> **I attend school until my adulthood.**
> **Pushed into books, formed**
> **into my parents' daughter.**
> **Individual is not in my**
> **vocabulary. Identity has no meaning.**
> **The future holds but a life**
> **that means little. I will enter**
> **the world, and leave**
> **without a trace.**
> **Taking over daddy's firm,**
> **I become my father.**
> **Retirement, unfulfillment,**
> **anger and regret; my life**
> **ends. I had no future.**
>
> Chris 1987[2]

The year 1900 was greeted as the beginning of the Century of the Child. It was to be a Century in which hard work, faith in the future, and improvements in health care and education would secure the blessings of a burgeoning industrial economy for all of the nation's young.

The Century had a vigorous beginning: its first two decades saw the expansion of public education, child labor legislation, and juvenile court systems; the establishment of the Children's Bureau and the first decennial White House Conference on Children; and the emergence of most of the major organizations that

still provide nonformal civic education and recreation programs for millions of our youth.

With all this attention and effort launched on their behalf, with celebrations honoring Years of the Child and of Youth behind us, how have our younger citizens fared? In more recent years, report after report has informed us: not well. They assert that our youth and hence, our nation are at risk. Communities have not ignored these findings, but typically, response has been reactive. They have gauged the adequacy of the environments they are providing for their young by the size of their inventories of capacity to repair and remediate. As we near the last decade of the Century of the Child, it is becoming apparent that a reactive approach has been inadequate. This examination by Wynn and her colleagues, of the proactive and reciprocal supports that communities and their adolescents can provide, offers a much-needed alternative focus for discussing paths to more positive youth development.

These researchers discovered that there is agreement that young individuals are indeed, in one way or another, shaped by the communities of which they are a part, but that much more is known about processes that have not "worked" in bringing about positive growth toward responsible adulthood than about those that have. They also observed that the bureaucracies created to deal with disruptive and disturbing symptoms of personal and community disorder are as fragmented in their strategies as the policies that have authorized them. Instead of leading to specific recommendations for new policy or programs, the authors' efforts suggest caution until information that can provide more reliable direction is at hand. Rather than comment directly upon what has been well-reviewed and well-said, I would like to suggest an additional area of importance to the research agenda on adolescents and communities: examining the power of symbols in shaping socializing environments.

YOUTH AND SYMBOLS

The terms we use to describe growth stages ("toddler," "kid," "adolescent") are essentially tools for describing difference--from each other, and from that pinnacle of the developmental process, "adult" (Baizerman, 1987). Although some would claim that the idea of the adolescent is primarily an invention of bewildered Victorians, the word itself seems to have been invented by speakers of the Latin tongue to define for their own age, similar sorts of "difference" characteristic of the problematic period between puberty and legal majority.[3] Decline in the typical age for the onset of puberty and increase in the length of economic dependency have created a need for finer distinctions, so that now our designations early, middle, and late adolescence, for example, cover a period spanning nearly a decade and a half.

Our categories do not merely and benignly fill a need for designating differences; they also become shorthand for imposing judgments related to difference on all who fall (or are sometimes pushed) within them. Language is our medium for creating, sustaining, and interpreting roles and thus for coordinating the social interactions through which individual lives acquire meaning and value to selves and others. Thus, if we are to understand the ways in which communities and adolescents shape each other, it is necessary to examine the rhetoric that becomes the matrix for experiencing one's own development.

The concept of "development" is a relatively new idea. As long as the transition from infancy to adulthood was thought about mainly in terms of increasing size, there was little theorizing about the "unfolding" processes that prevail in the thought of today. It was not until improvements in microscopes revealed that neither human egg nor sperm contained the long-hypothesized homunculus (or miniature person), and until the Protestant Reformation generated needs for new approaches to child-rearing, that developmental metaphors could come

into play. In times since, children and adolescents have been regarded variously as wretched sinners to be saved, empty vessels to be filled, tender plants to be cultivated, vexing problems to be solved, and most recently (and disturbingly) worrisome diseases to be cured. Metaphors tend to be modish, and each has enjoyed a particular period of favor during which it was translated into innovative programs (Sabbath school, kindergarten) and often also into bricks and mortar (correctional facilities, hospital adolescent care units). Alas, once found useful, metaphors rarely die, and most of these can be found lurking among the assumptions upon which many contemporary programs and institutions for youth have been designed. It is the "for" that is supported by such metaphors: they all provide a context of justification in which adults do something for (to) kids--usually, in their generosity, retaining power and control over the young and their behavior. Our approach to the young, has been not unlike colonialism, providing attractive, though circumscribed entitlements in return for forsaking roles that offer real options and real obligations.

Communities frequently attach another set of metaphors to their adolescents (particularly in such serious situations as graduations, announcements of pending school-bond levies, and the like). Youth are declared to be our "hope for the future," our "upcoming leaders," our "citizens of tomorrow," our "promise of continuing prosperity." While this is patently true (who else is there?), and on the surface may seem to glorify youth, the use of such symbols, to the near exclusion of those anchored in the present, is actually further debilitating. It has the subliminal effect of assigning greater value to future acts and accomplishments than to what they are able to achieve in their daily lives. Without external validation, adolescence for many, has become not a period to be enjoyed and appreciated for all the wonderful, expanding possibilities for growth that it holds in the here and now, but something to be endured until "real" life can begin at some future time.

If these promises held a guarantee for a golden future, it might be worth waiting for. It must be remembered, however, that many of our youth are skeptical as to whether they will have any future at all. As one concerned 16-year-old wrote:

> **When I think of the foolish forces that could control my destiny, I shudder. It frightens me that I may not live long enough to absorb gifts that a lifetime has to bestow.**
>
> **That I may not see a child of my own flesh and blood enter this world pangs me. That I may not feel the satisfaction of holding a job which I enjoy frustrates me. That I may not live out the last of my years gracefully and die happily in a natural manner scares me.**
>
> **But what can I do other than wait patiently until a more educated generation about nuclear war makes the world's decisions? I pray that it will not be too late.**[4]

Their feelings of exclusion from participation in the decisions that affect their everyday lives often translate into a general sense of powerlessness and cynicism toward those who hold power over them:

> **. . . Everyone says the future is bright. [Is it] in the sense of the fiery explosion? I hope that this isn't what they mean...**[5]

Another youngster expressed his feelings in a letter that he wished the President "would read thoroughly:"

> **Mr. President,**
>
> **When you were shot it was a national catastrophy** [sic] **and people cried for you. Who is going to cry for me if there is a nuclear war? That is, if anyone lives through one, if anyone would want to.**
>
> **Sincerely,**[6]

And still another asked:

> **What happens if the world comes to an end? Does that mean God's job is complete? Did He pass or fail?**[7]

It may be tempting to think that such musings are merely reflective, as the Victorians believed, of occasional morbid thoughts normal to the adolescent. However, studies show such fears to be widespread. For example, 48% of the Minnesota high school students responding to a Youth Poll (Hedin, et al., 1985) named "reducing the threat of nuclear war" as the most important issue facing the President in 1984. Their sense of helplessness was expressed in another Poll where

they were asked whether youth should try to influence government policy regarding nuclear issues. Just under half said no, it would be pointless; their opinions would not be valued and would have no effect. Only 2% had ever been personally involved in any anti-nuclear activity (Hedin, et al., 1985).

Some of the perceptions that youth held of the environments that are forming their present are no less desolate. In another part of the Youth Poll cited by Wynn and her colleagues, high school students in the Chicago area were asked: "What image do you think people have of teenagers?" A dismaying 97% of the the responses given indicated that they felt "people" held a very negative view of teens (Popowski, 1985). A Youth Poll conducted among Minnesota teens asked a similar, but more specific, question: "What do you think the following groups of people think of people your age? Police? Senior Citizens (old people)? Teachers? Parents?" After aggregating the responses for all four categories, 72% of the comments made by high school students reflected a belief that adults held negative views of them.[8] Although they admitted that some teens had earned this disapprobation, most of the Chicago area and Minnesota teens vehemently denied that they were "really like" this stereotype and pleaded to be treated with respect and as capable individuals willing, if asked, to assume responsibility for themselves and others. If we believe that reality is socially constructed and that personal consciousness is anchored in social processes, these studies raise important research issues:

> **What is it like to try to establish a positive sense of self in a community environment perceived as hostile to the categories to which one is consigned? Or: What is it really like to be a kid in this place, under these rules, with these people?**
> **Reciprocally, what costs or benefits may accrue through the images that communities convey to their young members?**

One consequence of the "colonization" of the young may be implied by the declining proportions of them who place community leadership and correcting social and economic inequalities among their own values.[9] This sense of "disconnection" from responsibility is further implied in the responses of Minnesota youth to a

question about what they felt youth owed their communities and countries. A third of these teens said nothing, "another one-fifth believed they owed their country attitudes of loyalty, patriotism, and respect, and one-tenth said they were obliged to become well-educated. Only one-fifth said they ought to provide tangible services to others" (Hedin, et al., 1985: 28). Other consequences, of course, are implied in the low rates of young potential voters' participation in the nation's political processes and by the statistics of destructive adolescent behaviors that are inimical not only to the commonweal, but to their own personal well-being. Such activities are also community-shaping, if, for example, they place strains on the public purse, or if youth create zones of fear that others shun.

Gerth and Mills call the symbolic environments in which individuals are socialized "symbol spheres." They note that to "understand how any given person strives, feels, and thinks we have to pay attention to the symbols he has internalized; but to understand these symbols, we have to grasp the way in which they co-ordinate institutional actions" (1953: 274). The Youth Polls suggest that youth reject many of the negative images that they feel are applied to them, but in doing so, may disengage themselves from, or at least be wary of, the adult institutions that are the source of these symbols.

Thus, in studying the organizations and programs that constitute community supports, we must also ask:

> **Are the "supports" that a community believes it is providing youth perceived by youth to be supportive? What do adolescents perceive to be the "real" functions that youth-serving systems have been designed to perform?**
>
> **Are the potentially supportive functions of institutions undermined by the meanings youth attach to the "symbol spheres" that they have created? Are youths' perceptions accurate?**
>
> **Upon what metaphors might programs be built if they are to be perceived as supportive by youth? Do different types of programs require different metaphorical foundations?**

How does a community wean itself from possibly dysfunctional metaphors of control over youth, to those of partnership with youth; from symbolizing adolescents as an abstract hope for the future, to considering them as a genuine resource for today?

All of these questions are related to issues of impact, but just as importantly, they are related to issues of process. Evaluation tends to focus on the outcomes of programs, often neglecting the processes of program development. It could well be the case that the most significant effects are a actually a consequence of process, not product. Rather than trying to adapt programs that have proved effective in one community for use in other set- tings, it might be better to concentrate efforts on recreating processes.[10]

RESEARCH AND ADOLESCENCE

Before beginning any new research, however, it might also be well to ask whether, and in what ways, previous work may have contributed to the current predicaments of youth. Inquiry has been predisposed to following adult reactions to the specific ways that succeeding cohorts of youth have chosen to express their "differentness." Starting with turn-of the-century probings of "precocity," investigation moved on to more specific troublesome areas such as deceit, delinquency (rather generically defined), and school failure, to large-scale examinations of a whole host of adolescent behaviors: drug use, rock music, alienation, sexual "promiscuity," (followed by pregnancy and parenting), and most recently, AIDS transmission. The issue is not that such studies have emerged from inappropriate concerns or that they have been unworthy subjects for examination, but rather, whether the aggregated statistics about adolescence that they have produced, have obscured real adolescents (Baizerman and deOliviera 1987) and hence directly contributed to the stereotyping that young people resent so acutely. The nearly exclusive emphasis on themes that adults (who control funding sources) find problematic has undermined the importance of youths' own, possibly quite different,

but equally significant concerns.

There may be still another, more subtle way that behavioral science has unwittingly contributed to the vulnerability of today's youth. Much of the research on moral development has roots in the work of Piaget and Kohlberg that emphasized justice, sustained through maturing concerns about rules. Gilligan (1976, 1987) has argued that this research overlooks an equally valid second "voice" in which moral concerns may be expressed: that of caring -- sustained through developing concerns about interpersonal relationships. Comparable research on moral development from the care perspective has really just begun. It is interesting to speculate on why this is so and where prior oversight may have led us.

Research, and the acceptance of research findings, do not take place in a cultural vacuum. Consciously, and no doubt sometimes unconsciously, we have been more accepting of research findings that fit comfortably with existing "symbol spheres." Among the symbols of which Americans seem to be uncommonly fond, for example, are metaphors of contest. No doubt they are a legacy of those obdurate colonists who heeded Biblical exhortations to keep themselves in training for the race to an eternal crown and clothed in the whole armor of God in readiness to put up a good fight against evil.[11] As was true of many other hallowed symbols, these were easily adapted to secular arenas--to the point that campaigning and gamesmanship may have become the dominant metaphors of our time--permeating all institutions and operating to coordinate actions within and among them. Could it be that the justice perspective of moral development theory has been so appealing to socializers of youth because its concern with rules is compatible with such a "symbol sphere?" Might it be pertinent to inquire whether the somewhat narrowly rule-focused moral education programs currently in use may serve to deny authenticity to adolescent absorption with the caring peer relationships that sustain their own communities of association. Might such education be developing leaders

who hold that as long as the rules are fair, and fairly observed, the object of a contest need not be questioned. Going even further, might it be well to ask if young people been given a Hobbesian lens through which to judge their communities so as to divide members into winners and losers, or who see winning or losing as the only possible outcomes of any conflict. Have we, in effect, constricted ethical boundaries so that youth are left susceptible to the blandishments of political opportunists with promises of rules and order and assurances that they will receive their due if they play by them. Answers to such hard, and perhaps unpopular questions, are needed to guide both the conduct and the use of further research.

OTHER COMMUNITIES

This discussion of the symbolic matrix surrounding adolescents and the institutions that try to promote their development suggests that in addition to communities of place, of jurisdiction, and of association, there may be others. One, for want of a better term might be called a "community of identification." Unlike other types of community, this one may remain an abstraction only, but like the reference groups that they resemble, may be no less "real" in their significance for the development of youth. Symbolic communities of identity are derived from the values placed upon "differentness," and upon "sameness" within the others. They may be created through a shared sense of exclusion or isolation, or through a shared sense of inclusion or access. However formed, communities with which the young identify themselves also confer value upon their members and give meaning to their activities, making "membership" a source of promise or despair.

There is a final "community" that warrants discussion here. Robert Bellah and his co-workers talked of the necessity for establishing "communities of memory" (1985: 152-155). Real communities, they say, must have a past, and they must be constantly involved in the honest retelling of their collective histories--stories of joys and sorrows; of their understanding of virtue as exemplified in the lives of

good people and bad; of suffering received and suffering inflicted. Communities of memory, they say,

> . . . that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those closest to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to a common good (1985: 153).

These may be the communities that our mobile American society most often denies our adolescents. If we are to begin to understand the other, more tangible communities, and what it means to be an adolescent within them, we must also identify and examine the symbolic communities that they foster and those that they neglect. If we do not, as Jane Addams noted near the beginning of our Century of the Child, all else will be spoiled.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Judith Erickson is an Associate Professor at the Center for Youth Development and Research at the University of Minnesota. She is completing a full-length monograph: America's Dreams for Its Children: Nonformal Education in Organizations for Youth, 1830 to Present. Earlier research for this project was conducted as a Visiting Fellow at the Boys Town Center for the Study of Youth Development. She completed an assignment with the Science Education Directorate of the National Science Foundation while on leave from her position in the Sociology Department of Macalester College.

ENDNOTES

1.I wish to thank Jerome Beker and Constance Fabunmi for their helpful critiques of an earlier draft.

2.The writer is a 17-year-old suburban high school senior. The poem was submitted to the monthly youth opinion feature, "Mindworks," of the Star Tribune Newspaper of the Twin Cities, in response to the topic: "Your dreams for the future, either for your own life or for the world."

3.Augustine (354-430 C.E.) used it, for example, to cover a period (from 16 to 18) of pre-saintly behavior during a hiatus in his school attendance. The scenarios are not unfamiliar to today's youthworkers: in one incident, he succumbed to peer pressure and helped fellow delinquents ravage a neighbor's pear crop; in a second, looking back on a demonstration of less than complete control while in the public baths, he reproached his parents for their failures to follow through with appropriate sex education.

4.Excerpt from an essay submitted to the "Journal Juniors" youth opinion feature of the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, in November, 1983, on the topic: "What do you wonder about most? Why?"

5.Essay submitted on topic: "What do you wonder about most? Why?" in November 1983.

6."Journal Juniors" essay submitted on topic: "What are your three wishes?" May, 1984.

7."Journal Juniors" essay submitted on topic: "What do you wonder about most? Why?" November 1983.

8.The proportion of negative responses increased markedly between those of 5th and 6th graders (49%) to those of junior high age (71%). Among all respondents, images attributed to police were the most negative (84%), followed by senior citizens (66%) and teachers (61%). It was surprising that over half (54%) also attributed negative views to parents.

9.The National Longitudinal Study of the Class of 1972 found that 12.3% of the high school seniors who considered community leadership "very important." In the 1980 High School and Beyond Study, the comparative proportion for high school seniors was 10%. In 1972, 28.1% thought working to correct social and economic inequalities was very important; in 1980, only 13.6% did. These figures may be contrasted with those for the item: "Having lots of money," which was very important to 18.2% in 1972, but to 31.4% in 1980 (National Opinion Research Center, 1980).

10.One promising approach is the "Community Improvement Cycle" developed by Gary Phillips, being used in the Minnesota Whole Child Initiative mentioned by Wynn, et al.. It engages an entire community in a "visioning" process, that it is hopes, will lead to empowerment for bringing about changes in conditions that are undermining positive youth development within that community (Friedmann, et al., 1987). Another process-oriented approach has been designed by William Lofquist of the Associates for Youth Development (1983).

Focusing on youth participation as a key to community development, it provides strategies for assessing human service activities and moving them away from an emphasis on remediation to one that promotes prevention.

11.Some popular references may be found in I Corinthians 9:24-27, and Ephesians 6:11-17.

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THE WILLIAM T. GRANT FOUNDATION COMMISSION ON WORK, FAMILY AND CITIZENSHIP

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American Youth: A Statistical Snapshot (July 1987) *by James R. Wetzel*

Drawing on the latest, statistically reliable government surveys, this demographic review captures much of the diversity inherent in a collective portrait of American 15-24 year-olds. Includes data on marriage, childbearing, living arrangements, income, education, employment, health, and juvenile justice. Historical trends as well as future projections are presented along with *12 charts, 18 tables.*

Current Federal Policies and Programs for Youth (June 1987) *by J.R. Reingold and Associates*

Who is doing what for youth in the federal government? This concise survey of current federal policies and programs for youth in Education, Health and Human Services, Labor, Justice and Defense provides a one-of-a-kind resource for researchers, practitioners, analysts and policymakers who want quick access to accurate information about federal youth policy. *Includes state-level allocation tables.*

Youth Policies and Practices in Selected Countries (August 1987) *by Rosemary George*

Presents the salient features of the post-compulsory education and training policies of 11 foreign countries designed to smooth the transition of now-college bound youth into the workplace, The countries are: Australia, Britain, Canada, Finland, France, West Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Japan, Norway and Sweden. *Includes tables.*

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The following **Working Papers** were prepared for the Commission's deliberations by a variety of scholars and practitioners. They are available at **$10.00 each postpaid** from the **Institute for Educational Leadership** (See previous page).

Youth Transition from Adolescence to the World of Work *by Garth Mangum.* **Commentaries** *by Marvin Lazerson and Stephen F. Hamilton.*

Youth and the Workplace: Second-Chance Programs and the Hard-to-Serve *by Thomas J. Smith, Gary C. Walker, Rachel A. Baker, (Public/Private Ventures).* **Commentaries** *by Gary Burtless, Jacqueline Danzberger, Morton Sklar, Richard F. Elmore.*

Who Will Train and Educate Tomorrow's Workers? The Financing of Non-College-Bound Young Workers' Recurrent Education *by Robert Sheets, Andrew Hahn, Robert Lerman and Erik Butler.*

Youth and Work: What We Know, What We Don't Know, What We Need to Know *by Ivan Charner and Bryna Shore Fraser (National Institute for Work and Learning).* **Commentaries** *by Sue E. Berryman and Hayes Mizell.*

The Bridge: Cooperative Education for All High School Students *by Cynthia Parsons.* **Commentaries** *by Dennis Gray and David Lynn, Morgan V. Lewis, Roy L. Wooldridge.*

What Does the Independent Sector Do for 16-24 Year-Olds? *by Miriam M. Wood.* **Commentaries** *by Virginia Hodgkinson and Leonard Stern.*

The Interaction of Family, Community, and Work in the Socialization of Youth *by Stephen F. Hamilton.* **Commentaries** *by John Ogbu and Paul Riesman.*

The Difference that Differences Make: Adolescent Diversity and Its Deregulation *by Melvin D. Levine.* **Commentaries** *by Michael Wald and John H. Martin.*

Transitional Difficulties of Out-of-Home Youth *by Joy Duva and Gordon Raley.* **Commentaries** *by Eileen Pasztor and Peter R. Correia III and Anita Fream.*

The Transition to Adulthood of Youth with Disabilities *by David Vandergoot, Amy Gottlieb and Edwin W. Martin.* **Commentaries** *by Sharon Stewart Johnson and Diane Lipton and Mary Lou Breslin.*

Mutuality in Parent-Adolescent Relationships *by James Youniss.* **Commentaries** *by Ann C. Crouter and John H. Lewko.*

Communities and Adolescents: An Exploration of Reciprocal Supports *by Joan Wynn, Harold Richman, Robert A. Rubenstein and Julia Littell with Brian Britt and Carol Yoken.* **Commentaries** *by Diane P. Hedin and Judith B. Erickson.*

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